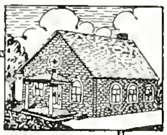

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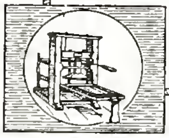

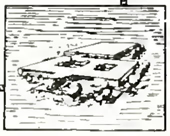

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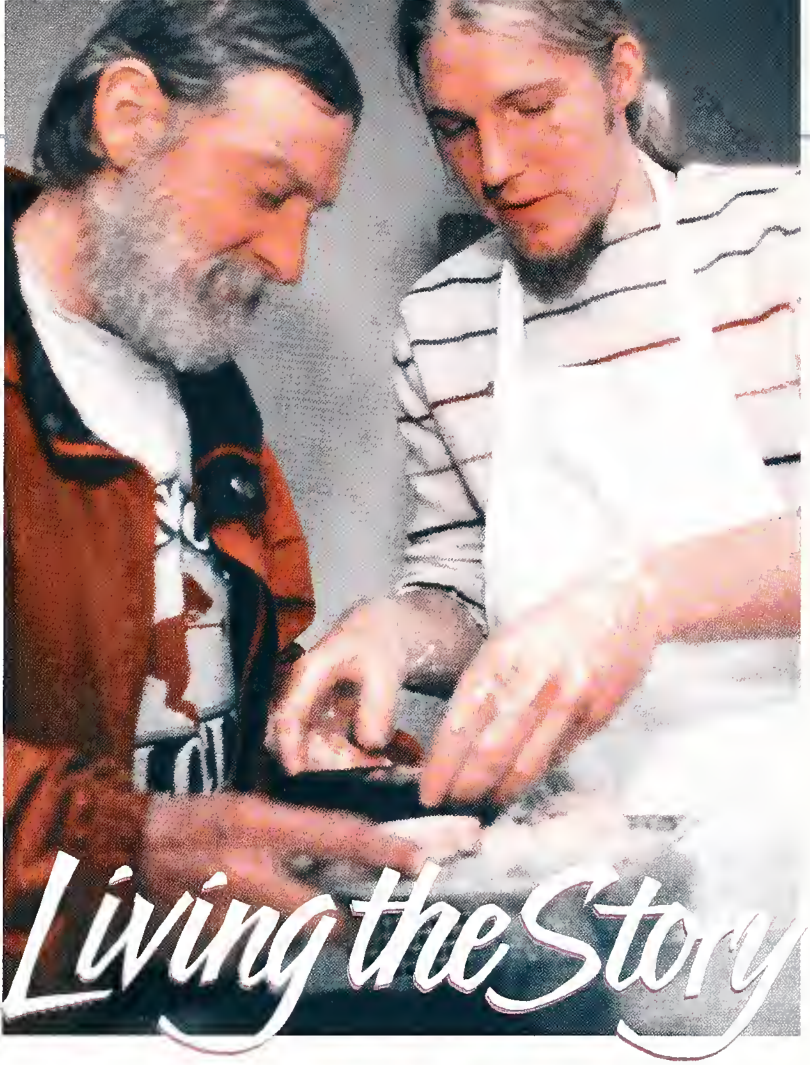
Church of the Brethren

January/February 1998

Messenger

Reconciler

Moderator Elaine Sollenberger works to bring us together



Washington, D.C. Soup Kitchen. Phil Grout photo

Celebrating 50 years of Brethren Volunteer Service

The Good News, the story of Jesus, is to be proclaimed and celebrated. In words, yes, but also in the wordless words of love: feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, healing the sick, consoling the lonely, bringing together the estranged, working for peace and justice.

To tell the story by living the story: that's what 50 years of Brethren Volunteer Service and 5,376 volunteers and 420 projects in 40 countries are all about. God's call to reconciliation is a ministry that never ends.

In your support of Brethren Volunteer Service, you help make Jesus' love visible.

Telling the story. Living the story.

BVS 50 years 1948–1998

Messenger

Vol. 147, No. 1 January/February 1998

Editor: Fletcher Farrar
News: Nevin Dulabaum
Subscriptions: Vicki Roche
Publisher: Wendy McFadden

Tom Grance

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Since she was called back to the moderator's chair under unusual circumstances last summer, Elaine Sollenberger has been working to bring Brethren together. She reflects on how the church calls its leaders, on challenges facing the Brethren, and on faithfulness.

19 Justice? Or just us?
David Radcliff, director of Brethren witness, outlines how Brethren might live in the face of economic injustice and global hunger.

22 Hope for the middle-class malaise
A new book suggests that churches are suffering budget crunches because their middle-class members are too stressed, busy, and deep in debt to think about giving. Problems of work and modern life need more attention from pastors.

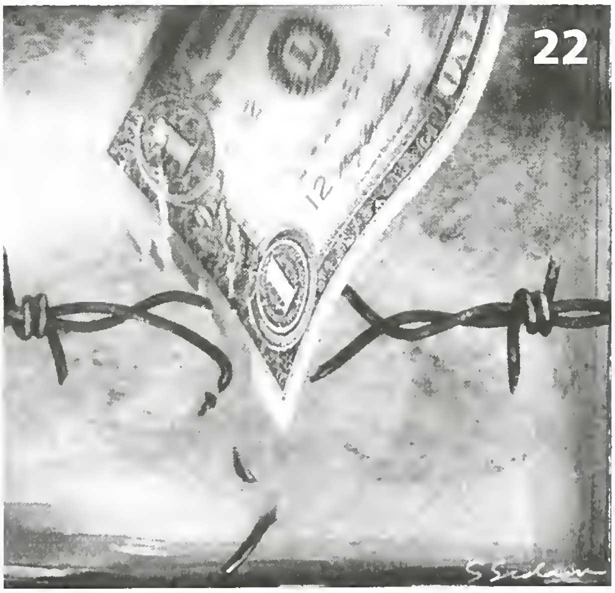
26 My prayer promise
Former moderator David Wine promised to spend an hour a day, a day a month, and a week a year in prayer. We asked for his reflections on how he's done and how prayer has changed his life.

On the cover: Two-time moderator Elaine Sollenberger in her home church in Everett, Pa. Her home church gives her a strong base from which to lead.

(Cover photo illustration by Paul Stocksdale; background photo by Tom Grance)

World Council of Churches

David Radcliff



Los Angeles Times

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From the Publisher

With this issue we bid farewell to Kermon Thomasson, who has guided MESSENGER for 20 years, and welcome Fletcher (Bud) Farrar.

I first learned to know Kermon by reading two years' worth of MESSENGERS all at once. I was preparing to join the magazine staff, and this reading exercise served as a short course in the Church of the Brethren.

It also turned out to be an invigorating introduction to Kermon, whose stamp has appeared on the magazine for 23 years. His personality has been most evident on the editorial page. Like many people, I often turn to that page first.

As editor, Kermon has determined editorial policy and content and given overall direction to the magazine. He has covered church ministries across the US and in Nigeria, Sudan, India, Poland, and South Korea.

Kermon joined the MESSENGER staff in 1974. In 1977 he became acting editor and in 1979 editor. Prior to joining the MESSENGER staff, he served the Church of the Brethren Mission in Nigeria for 13 years.

Regular readers know that he is partial to (among other things) Nigeria, his home state of Virginia, Mark Twain, Brer Rabbit, history, and the Church of the Brethren. He is most comfortable expressing himself on the printed page, and that's where his keen insights and sharp wit have flourished.

Fletcher Farrar, church board chair of the First Church of the Brethren, Springfield, Ill., has been owner and publisher of *Illinois Times* for 20 years, until selling the weekly newspaper last summer.

He is completing a term on the Association of Brethren Caregivers board, serves on the board of Pleasant Hill Village, the Brethren nursing home in Girard, Ill., and was a member of the Annual Conference simple life study committee.

Fletcher brings to his new assignment a passion for making faith relevant in everyday life. This sense of discipleship is borne out in a number of ways, one of them being his interest in purchasing and rehabilitating housing for low-income renters in his neighborhood.

Fletcher is responsible for both the editorial and business sides of a magazine that is now expected to pay its own way, following the General Board's major budget reductions in 1997. The plan is to increase advertising and subscription income while costs are reduced through a change in printers and a decrease in staffing. So the task ahead is a large one.

Fletcher is married to Mary Jessup, a pastor, university instructor, and writer. He has two daughters–Ann, a junior at Indiana University, and Elizabeth, a junior in high school. Fletcher will continue to live in Springfield, a situation that is providing new learnings for everyone involved but working out amazingly well. (All MESSENGER mail should still be sent to Elgin.) In a sense, he is one more congregational life team member working out in the field.

Wendy McFadden

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Coming next month

Congregational life teams come to life.

District Messenger representatives: Atl. N.E., Ron Lutz; Atl. S.E., Ruby Raymer; Ill./Wis., Kreston Lipscomb; S/C Ind., Marjorie Miller; Mich., Ken Good; Mid-Atl., Ann Fouts; Mo./Ark., Luci Landes; N. Plains, Faith Strom; N. Ohio, Alice L. Driver; S. Ohio, Jack Kline; Ore./Wash., Marguerite Shamberger; Pac. S.W., Randy Miller; M. Pa., Eva Wampler, S. Pa., Elmer Q. Gleim; W. Pa., Jay Christner; Shen., Tim Harvey; S.E., Donna Shumate; S. Plains, Mary Ann Dell; Virlina, Jerry Naff; W. Plains, Dean Hummer; W. Marva, Winoma Spurgeon.

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Baptism celebrates faith, community, heritage

More than 45 members and friends of the University Park Church of the Brethren of Hyattsville, Md., gathered along the banks of the Wissahickon Creek in Philadelphia as three young people from the congregation were baptized in the creek Sept. 21. Anna Meyers, one of the three, had talked about being baptized in the creek near Germantown since studying about the Wissahickon and the origins of the Brethren in America. Five years ago she had studied the *Whatza Wissahickon* materials published by Brethren Press. As the three—Robyn Holl, Anna Meyers, and Jeremy Siegel—participated in a membership class over the last year, they all became excited about being baptized in the waters where the first Brethren in America were immersed.

The baptisms became a church outing and eventually involved three congregations. The University Park congregation traveled to Germantown by tour bus. Darlene Meyers, mother of Anna Meyers and pastor of neighboring Good Shepherd Church, invited members of her congregation to join in the outing. As the group met briefly with the Germantown congregation in worship, a young man from that congregation, Ronnie Horton, expressed his desire to be baptized along with the Maryland young people that day. So it was that four young people bravely professed their faith and stepped into the cool waters of the Wissahickon, one at a time, to be baptized by University Park pastor Kim McDowell.—Gloria Kindy

Thatza Wissahickon. *Anna Meyers being baptized by her pastor, Kim McDowell, in Wissahickon Creek.*

Brethren logo at Arlington Cemetery

Officials at Arlington National Cemetery outside of Washington D.C. recently approved the use of the Church of the Brethren logo on one of its memorials.

The church's logo will adorn a brass marker at the grave of Frank William Miller, a member of the Woodberry Church of the Brethren in Baltimore, who died on Oct. 12, 1997, at age 78.

Such permission is a rare occurrence. The logo is one of only 32 religious symbols approved for use at the cemetery. A copy of the logo and an explanation of its significance was submitted to cemetery officials by Fred Wilhelm, brother-in-law of Miller.

Miller served as a medical photographer at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington during World War II. He is survived by his wife, Eunice Wallace Miller.

Living Gift Market

The **Living Gift Market** held in November in North Manchester, Ind., raised nearly $11,000 to benefit Heifer Project International, and more donations were still coming in. The event attracted 160 people.

Jane Harshbarger *tells stories to children as part of the Living Gift Market in North Manchester, Ind.*

Marriage 65, Messenger 41

Congratulations to Elmer and Marie West of Corning, Iowa, members of the Salem Church of the Brethren, who recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. They note that they have subscribed to MESSENGER for 41 years.

Seminarian explains why he works with the poor

Steve Brady, a third-year student at Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind., has been working as an intern with the Richmond Human Rights Commission and the Interfaith Mission in Richmond. Though most Bethany students do internships in churches, Brady said he wants to work directly to help the poor.

He credits his ministry interest to earlier Church of the Brethren work camps and volunteer experience in North Carolina, Honduras, and Korea. His work and inspiration were featured last October in the Richmond *Palladium-Item* newspaper, which quoted Brady referring to his Honduran experience: "Coming from a culture that values material things and measures success by degrees or high salaries, on the surface it seemed that they [Hondurans] had nothing. It became evident that they had something we didn't have—perseverance and faith."

Thanks-giving for another year

On Thanksgiving 1996 the family of Dale and Ruth Aukerman gathered to choose a cemetery plot for Dale, who had been "given" by medical doctors two to six months to live. But God gave Dale more months. So on Thanksgiving 1997, as they have in the past, they invited volunteers at New Windsor to be their guests.

Leland and Jeanette Grove of Laurens, Iowa, and Eugene and Eloise Lichty of McPherson, Kan., joined the Aukermans for a day of giving thanks, of love, inspiration, and spiritual renewal. Their 250-year-old restored log house was a perfect setting for the Thanksgiving meal, and the guests walked in the rolling meadows while Dale took his short rest.

Dale Aukerman continues with his prolific writing and work for peace. Ruth Aukerman was recently given the award of Maryland Art Educator of the Year.—ELOISE LICHTY

Remembered

Mazie S. Myer, the oldest member of the Akron (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, died Oct. 3, 1997, at Brethren Village, Lancaster, Pa. She enjoyed bingo, painting ceramics, and fishing. She is survived by four

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

sons, one daughter, 27 grandchildren, 56 great grandchildren, and 23 great great grandchildren.

- The Rev. Antoinette H. "Nettie" Sheets died Sept. 17, 1997, in Akron, Ohio, at age 84. She was a member of the Paradise Church of the Brethren, Smithville, Ohio. She was a graduate of the Salvation Army Bible College in New York City and later attended Ashland Seminary. She was an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren and had pastored Richland Church of the Brethren, Mansfield, Ohio, for 14 years. She retired in 1984.

- Margaret "Peggy" M. Cassel, a member of the Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, died July 12, 1997, at age 84. She was a trustee at Elizabethtown College during the 1960s and 1970s. From 1943 to 1945 she was in charge of care for newborn babies at Castañer Hospital in Puerto Rico.

The church love built

The new Butler Chapel A.M.E. Church, rebuilt after being destroyed by arson, was dedicated Jan. 9-11. Patrick Mellerson, the Butler Chapel pastor featured on the July 1997 Messenger cover, invited all Brethren youth workcampers and Disaster Response volunteers who helped with the rebuilding to join in the celebration. The Emergency Response/Service Ministries program reported that 294 volunteers and workcampers contributed 1,700 workdays to the construction of the new church building near Orangeburg, S.C. The value of their labor is estimated at $163,000.—Howard Royer

Up from the ashes. *294 volunteers contributed 1,700 workdays to the rebuilding of Butler Chapel. The new building was dedicated January 9-11.*

THIS BUILDING PROJECT
IS A PARTNERSHIP OF
BUTLER CHAPEL AME CHURCH
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
DISASTER RESPONSE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
HABITAT INTERNATIONAL

For the Malian army, *Andy Murray is helping develop a more democratic code of conduct. He is pictured with General Brehima Sire, Inspector General of the Malian Army and General Chairman of the workshop.*

A military code of conduct

Andy Murray, director of the Baker Institute and professor of peace and conflict studies at Juniata College, traveled last fall to the West African country of Mali. He was sent there by the United Nations Development program to help produce a code of conduct for armed and security forces in Mali.

For that task he met with military and government officials and with representatives of several United Nations organizations. Representatives from Mauritania, Niger, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, and Senegal also participated in the meeting.

The code of conduct will lay out strict norms of behavior for military and police personnel in a democratic society and under civilian control.

According to Tore Rose, resident coordinator of United Nations programs in Mali, if the Code of Conduct becomes a reality it will be the first of its kind in Africa.

"The document has a strong human rights component,"said Murray," and it also lays out the whole issue of civilian control of the military in clear and certain language. Given the fact that the document runs contrary to so much that has been taken for granted in post-colonial African armies, I am encouraged at the level of investment the Malian military and gendarmerie have made in this process and by the commitment the government seems to have in seeing that this actually gets done."

Murray's primary role at the workshop was to evaluate the document from an educational point of view. "My job," said Murray, "was to struggle with the legal heads for a less complex and shorter document. If it has value it will be in its cultural impact. The potential for that impact will be directly related to the simplicity of the Code. The technical instruments are already in place."

Murray was also a part of a smaller working group charged with developing a special chapter on human rights. The process has produced a text for a small arms moratorium which is now being discussed by a number of West African nations.

Murray serves as a special consultant to UNDP on the role of education in peacebuilding. This was his fourth trip to West Africa in 1997.

News

Young adults focus on Jesus and his role in their lives

A spirit of sharing and support was what 157 Church of the Brethren young adults experienced Nov. 27–29, at the annual Young Adult Conference, held at Camp Mack, near Milford, Ind.

Melissa Collett

Anointing service. *Ken Rieman of Richmond, Ind., and Andy Ulrich of North Manchester, Ind., embrace during an anointing service at this year's Church of the Brethren Young Adult Conference. The conference, attended by 157, focused on "Jesus: The Man, the Message, and Me."*

Within this comfortable atmosphere the theme "Jesus: The Man, the Message, and Me" was discussed as a way for participants to learn more about Jesus, each other, and the church.

Main group sessions were led by Christy Waltersdorff, pastor of York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill. An important component of these sessions was the frequent use of random small groups.

Waltersdorff guided participants in an exploration of the Gospels without supplying easy answers. Small group members discussed Jesus' message and his impact on their lives. Individuals were forced to confront their own spirituality.

"It was a powerful experience to see 150 young adults with their Bibles open, talking about Jesus," Waltersdorff said.

This mood of self-examination coupled with faith sharing carried over to the variety of worship experiences that took place during the conference. A Taizé service offered a chance to quietly commune with God, while a traditional feetwashing service and the sharing of communion led participants to feel a part of the community of believers, in addition to "sharing the table" with Jesus. A high level of energy during worship times was due, in part, to the music selected and singing led by Shawn Kirchner.

The nurturance and support of the gathered community was much in need Friday morning when Tim Stryker of Goshen (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, was informed that his younger brother, Steve, who had been missing for several days, was confirmed dead. Steve was reportedly murdered by several people in an alcohol-induced incident. Tim stayed at the conference and the group literally surrounded him with its love.

The weekend also gave participants time to discuss issues that are relevant to faith and the larger church—political concerns, Brethren peace witness, conflict resolution, and the death penalty. Many of these issues came up in the large group sessions and in several workshops. These workshops—each in their own way—were reflections on Jesus' teachings about spirituality and service.

Young Adult Conference provides participants an opportunity to dialog with and support one another. Yet, the larger church plays a role in their development as well.

"Young adults are dealing with tough questions and they need a church that will help them to struggle to find the answers," Waltersdorff said.—NATE HAJDU

Annual Conference convenes symposium on South Korea

A symposium that dealt specifically with the former Church of the Brethren mission in South Korea and with global mission in general was held Dec. 6–7 at the initiative of the Annual Conference officers.

Seventeen people attended, representing the Annual Conference office, the General Board, and a group of congregations and individuals who

News items are intended to inform. They do not necessarily represent the opinions of MESSENGER *or the General Board, and should not be considered to be an endorsement or advertisement.*

have special interest in global mission.

The idea for the meeting originated during the General Board's October meetings, when members of the global mission group addressed the Board (see page 6, December 1997).

It became evident at those meetings that while the group believes only Annual Conference can rescind its 1990 call for Brethren mission in South Korea, the General Board believes it did try to plant the Brethren movement there, but had to eliminate that ministry as part of its redesign.

It was in this context that the symposium was held.

The participants began by identifying issues relating to mission philosophy, polity and procedures, and trust. They then reached consensus on a number of principles before producing a list of recommendations and a separate list of cautions.

Nevin Dulabaum

Korea conference. *Participants of the December symposium on South Korea and on global mission in general were Duane Steiner, Anne Myers, Lamar Gibble, Joe Mason, Wayne Zunkel, Bonnie Kline Smeltzer, Dan Kim, Bentley Peters, Elaine Sollenberger, Lowell Flory, Karen Peterson Miller, Olden Mitchell, Earl Hostetter, Lori Sollenberger Knepp, Merv Keeney, and Cathy Huffman.*

Although consensus was not reached on all points, two significant results did occur. Out of the symposium was the understanding that all future mission inquiries within the denomination should be routed through the denomination's new Mission and Ministries Planning Council. And the Annual Conference officers plan to initiate clarification over the question of authority and the rigidity of Annual Conference directives.

"The symposium was a needed step to take," said Elaine Sollenberger, Annual Conference moderator. "Even though we adjourned the meeting, I would hope there would be continuing discussion and would hope that maybe out of it there would be some better ways of understanding each other. I think the best part of the symposium hasn't happened yet."

BBT asks Annual Conference to approve revisions and modifications to its polity and policies

Revisions to its polity and modifications to the Retired Church Workers' Fund (RCWF) are proposed changes the Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) board is asking Annual Conference to approve. This request comes out of action taken during the board's November meetings.

The proposed polity revisions reflect an expanded vision for BBT and allow possible new financial programs and services. The modified RCWF will provide long-term financial help for active and retired church employees under the new name "Church Workers' Assistance Plan." This plan is intended to complement the General Board's Crisis in Transition Fund (CIT).

The CIT Fund will continue focusing on short-term emergency needs of pastors in transition. The proposed Church Workers' Assistance Plan will focus on lay employees, pastors, and district staff who have larger, long-term financial needs. Inquiries can be made in confidence to Don Fecher at (800) 746-1505.

The board learned that "exceptional investment returns" will enable BBT to send an extra, one-time check to Pension Plan members who were retired by September. They also received a permanent three-percent increase in January. One hundred Equitable retirees (former lay employees of the General Board) shared $144,000 from the Supplemental Income Fund for Equitable Annuitants—$10,000 more than in 1996.

The board held the January medical plan rate increase to 10 percent for six months, and gave approval for employer groups who use the Brethren Medical Plan (not applicable to the Ministers' Group) to offer long-term disability insurance as a stand-alone option.

Please, oh, please. *Don Fecher, staff, and Gail Habecker, board member, look more concerned than they really were in November during BBT's board meeting while discussing the tentative sale of Bethany Seminary's former campus in Oak Brook, Ill.*

Nevin Dulabaum

General Board, Southern Plains announce staff changes

Jeff Glass

Duane Grady

Jim Kinsey

David Smalley

John Thomas Sr.

Jeff Glass, pastor of First Church of the Brethren, San Diego, has been appointed half-time coordinator of the Area 5 Congregational Life Team. He has also served congregations in Laton, Calif., and Hagerstown, Md.

Duane Grady, co-pastor of Northview Church of the Brethren, Indianapolis, has been named half-time member of Area 2 Congregational Life Team. He has served as program associate at Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Peace Center; as coordinator of the Iowa Peace Network; and as executive director of the Interfaith Council for the Homeless, Chicago.

Jim Kinsey of Lake Odessa, Mich., has been named half-time member of Area 2 Congregational Life Team. In addition to this half-time position, Kinsey will continue serving as executive of Michigan District. Kinsey has pastored congregations in Marion, Ohio, and Freeport, Mich. In October he concluded his assignment as interim co-director of the General Board's Ministry office.

David Smalley, pastor of Eden Valley Church of the Brethren, St. John, Kan., has been appointed coordinator of Area 4 Congregational Life Team. He has also served as pastor of the Pittsburg (Ind.) and Fairview (Pa.) congregations, and served in Gotha, Fla., on New Covenant Church of the Brethren's leadership team while working as associate editor of News Media Directories.

John Thomas Sr. began serving as interim executive of Southern Plains District on Nov. 15. This is a one-quarter-time position. From 1981 until 1987 Thomas served half-time in the same position, while also working as a school administrator.

BVS Unit 227. *Twenty-nine people entered Brethren Volunteer Service last fall, participating in three weeks of orientation at Camp Swatara in Bethel, Pa. Thirteen from the unit are Church of the Brethren members. Four of the BVSers are from Germany, with one each from Poland and the United Kingdom. "This is the largest unit we've had since 1993," said Dan McFadden, BVS director, "and I'm excited about that." (See page 31 for names and placement assignments.)*

Bethany plans a technology and education symposium

A symposium for Bethany Theological Seminary board members and staff has been planned for March 27–29. As decided at its October board meetings, Bethany will use the time to explore ways of providing its programs to those who cannot study in residence.

During its meetings, board members Janice Ruhl of Manheim, Pa., and Clara Patterson of Dayton, Ohio, were recognized for the recent creation of two endowments—the Donald E. Ruhl Endowment for Student Recruitment and the Patterson Endowment for Stewardship Education and Development.

The board approved the establishment of a cross-cultural bank to assist students in financing cross-cultural experiences. Bethany has established a cross-cultural course requirement and will contribute $600 toward each student fulfilling that requirement. Students are also expected to contribute $600.

The Board also set 1998-1999 tuition at $5,673, and heard from its auditor that Bethany continues to build financial stability.

In Brief

An appeal for congregations to send delegates to this year's Annual Conference in Orlando was made in December by moderator Elaine Sollenberger. Only an estimated 600 churches sent epresentatives to last summer's Conference in Long Beach, Calif., fewer than half of the 1,400 delegate seats that represent the denomination's 1,116 congregations.

"Each congregation has the opportunity, as well as the responsibility, to help with the decision-making of the church by sending one or more delegates—depending on membership size—to Annual Conference," Sollenberger wrote. She added, 'Delegates are key to helping us feel and understand the connection between the congregations and the larger church body."

Teachers of elementary school vocal music and high school business education are being sought by the General Board to serve as missionaries in Nigeria. These positions require a two-year minimum commitment and include a support package consisting of housing, transportation, a medical plan, and a living allowance. For more information, contact Elsie Holderread at (800) 323-8039.

Eighteen youth and four advisers from Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia attended a peace academy Nov. 8–9 at the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., sponsored by On Earth Peace Assembly. "The main sessions focused on how to confront conflict, how to be an advocate, and how to engage our global world," said Kate Johnson of OEPA.

'Family-based youth ministry" was the theme for this year's annual Youth Ministry Workshop, held Nov. 8 at Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren. Eighty-seven junior and senior high youth advisers attended the six-hour training seminar, which was ed by Mark DeVries, author of the book *Family-Based Youth Ministry.* A two-hour video of the workshop is available for loan rom Youth and Young Adult Ministries. Call (800) 323-8039.

Lori Sollenberger Knepp is serving as acting General Board chair through January, according to a decision made Dec. 3 by he Board's Executive Committee. Chris Bowman, the elected chair, has not served in that capacity since early October as a esult of a multiple sclerosis flare-up. However, as of early December, Bowman's speech and vision had improved to the point where he could again drive.

"We thank God for the healing thus far and for the overwhelming support of family, friends, the church and many acquaintances," wrote Sherry Bowman. "It has been a long, harrowing experience from which we have learned how much we value health, good relationships, and our faith."

After languishing for about a year as a nearly defunct organization, new life was breathed into the Global Women's Project in early November as four members of its steering committee met in Merrillville, Ind. They reaffirmed the project's goal of sensitizing Brethren women to overconsumption and the effect overconsumption has on women at home and abroad. They decided to resume production of GWP's newsletter, and to plan more travel to bring Brethren women and the women in GWP-sponsored projects together. They hope to meet in different districts, and to provide educational programming in those areas.

Nevin Dulabaum

Environmentalists. *Members of a new environmental working group met in November to discuss future initiatives of the General Board's environmental ministry, a function of the Brethren Witness office. The group included Tim Kreps of Bloomington, Ind.; Sarah Stafford of North Manchester, Ind.; program associate Karin Davidson; Brethren Witness director David Radcliff; Dar Miller of Dillsburg, Pa.; and Dianna Ullery of Olympia, Wash. The group was joined by Shantilal Bhagat (right), former director of Eco-Justice Concerns. It decided to produce a quarterly newsletter to highlight environmental stewardship opportunities for church members, and made plans for a Brethren initiative to help stem global warming.*

Melinda Van Slyke of Spring Green, Wis., departed Nov. 18 for a year-long stay in Nuevo Mexico, Guatemala, to serve as a human rights observer and international accompanier. Since the signing of a peace accord in late 1996, which ended the 36-year Guatemalan civil war, many people who fled their homes to escape the violence and oppression have returned. Ivester (Grundy Center, Iowa), Modesto (Calif.), Mexico (Ind.), and Highland Avenue (Elgin, Ill.) Church of the Brethren congregations have committed to serving as partners in this ministry.

Two Emergency Disaster Fund grants totaling $24,000 were allocated in November—$15,000 for the Middle East Council of Churches and to Lutheran World Service–Jerusalem Program, and $9,000 to Grassroots International for its work following the Oct. 8 landfall in Mexico by Hurricane Pauline, which killed over 275 people and destroyed or damaged 56,000 homes.

God's promises to the oppressed are among the topics examined in *Daniel*, the 26th title in the Covenant Bible Studies Series, now available from Brethren Press. This latest title was written by Frank Ramirez, pastor of Elkhart (Ind.) Valley Church of the Brethren. This series is designed for use by small groups. Most of the titles also include resources for sharing, prayer, and action. Cost of *Daniel* is $5.95. To order, call (800) 441-3712.

Special Report

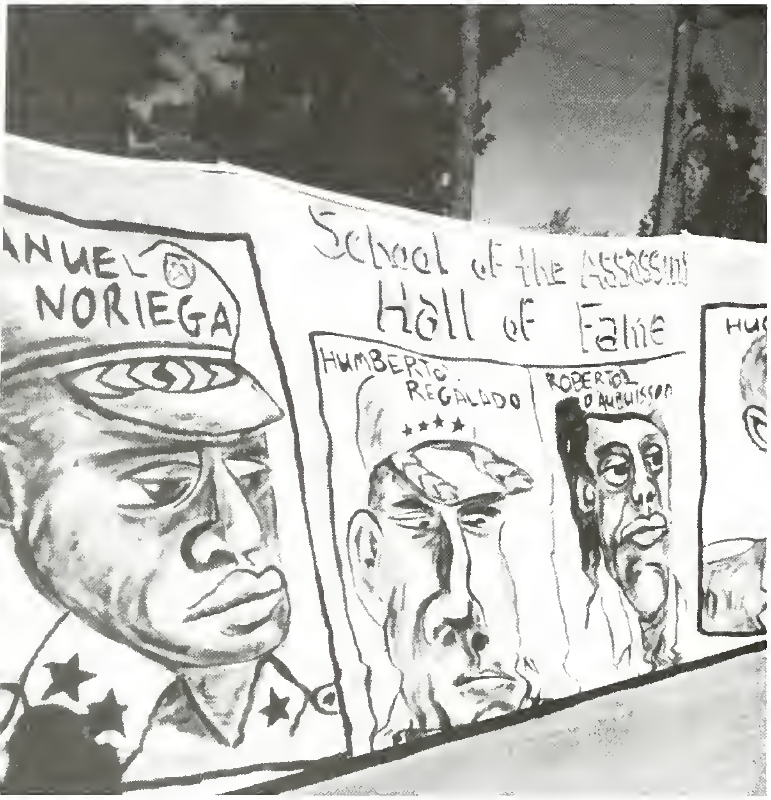
The greatest sin is standin

STORY AND PHOTOS BY HEATHER NOLEN

Five Brethren were among the 601 protesters arrested at Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga., Nov. 16, after marching two miles into the base to oppose the continued operation of its School of the Americas (SOA). SOA graduates have been repeatedly cited for egregious human rights violations—kidnaping, extortion, murder, and torture.

That day marked the anniversary of the assassination of six Jesuit priests and their two women co-workers at the University of Central America in San Salvador, El Salvador. Nineteen of the 26 military officers cited for those assassinations were SOA graduates.

Other notorious graduates include Manuel Noriega; 10 of the 12 men cited for the El Mozote massacre of over 900 civilians; two of the three officers cited for the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero; 100 of the 246 officers cited by an international tribunal in 1993 for war crimes in Colombia; Guatemalan general Hector Gramajo, who is responsible for the murder and displacement of thousands of Guatemalans; and the Peruvian officers convicted of murdering nine university students and a professor in 1994.



Hall of Shame? *This "Hall of Fame" of notorious SOA graduates served as backdrop for the vigil's popular street theater.*

Speaking out for those already silenced

BY SHELLY UNGEMACH

Standing with my cross, waiting to walk past a seemingly arbitrary line on the ground, I experienced a rollercoaster of emotions.

I remembered reading, on a trip to Guatemala, accounts of massacres, and seeing the names of those killed listed. At the time it didn't seem that important to read every name, so I skimmed over them.

Those names took on new significance Nov. 16 when they were sung out to the crowd protesting the US School of the Americas. The crowd, in turn, answered back, "Presente!" Suddenly those names on the crosses became more than just letters, and those who had been killed at the hands of SOA graduates became more than just statistics. Brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, friends—they were all there, surrounding us as we prepared to walk onto the base. And I was angry—angry that I would have to do something as silly as get myself arrested so that they might have a voice and so that the institution that legitimized their killing could be stopped.

As the drums continued to call us on and the crowd continued its chanting, Nathan Musselman (of Oak Grove Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va., and a fellow Eastern Mennonite University student) and I stepped over the line. There was no turning back.

We walked in silence with tear-filled eyes and angry hearts to buses that swallowed us and transported us further inside the base where we would be processed. The ride was full of reflection for some and singing for others. The rest of the afternoon consisted of a lot of waiting—on the bus and then in a yard.

The first step of processing was relinquishing all our possible "weapons" —pens, pins, nail clippers, and other like objects, which we were told would be returned to us. They were, minus any item that had SOA printed on it.

Next came the pat-down, followed by more waiting. Finally: Processing time! I was ushered to a seat in front of a smiling man who asked me my name, address, and more. Then, unexpectedly, he said, "You're from Pennsylvania? I live in Harrisburg. Do you know of Hershey Park? I took my family there this summer. Isn't Palmyra the

dly by

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Demonstrating, Brethren style. *Brethren from Indiana, Massachusetts, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., traveled to Columbus, Ga., in November to protest against the US military's School of the Americas.*

After three days of planning, the Nov. 16 demonstration consisted of a solemn "funeral" procession, with a quarter of the protesters crossing onto the base. Some protesters acted as pallbearers for coffins filled with 100,000 signatures that called for the closing of the school. The remaining protesters who crossed the line walked two by two behind the coffins carrying crosses that bore the names of people who have died at the hands of SOA graduates.

Other protesters who did not cross the line brought the total attendance to an estimated 2,500, five times more than in 1996.

Brethren known to have participated in the funeral procession and unlawfully entering the base were Ken Brown, Shelly Ungemach, Nathan Musselman, Yvonne Dilling, and Raenya Burkhart. They and the other "line crossers" were arrested in violation of a US code that requires military bases to be free of political activity. Following their arrests they received letters barring them from the base. Of the 601 line crossers, 28 were repeat offenders and were ordered to appear in court. On Nov. 19, Carol Richardson, director of the School of the Americas Watch in Washington, D.C., pleaded guilty as charged and was given the maximum sentence for unlawful re-entry—six months in jail and a $3,000 fine.

Before crossing over onto the base, vigil participants took part in a commissioning service. They agreed to act nonviolently, speaking these commitments in unison:

- We will harbor no anger, but suffer the anger of the opponent *("opponent" meaning opposite in beliefs, not "enemy").*
- We will refuse to return the assaults, verbal or physical.
- We will refrain from insults and swearing.
- We will protect opponents from insults or attack.
- If arrested, we will behave in an exemplary manner. We will not evade the legal consequences of our actions.
- As members of a nonviolent demonstration, we will follow the directions of the designated coordinators; in the event of a serious disagreement, we will remove ourselves from the action.
- Our attitude as conveyed through words, symbols and actions will be one of openness, friendliness, and

Crossing the line. *Nathan Musselman and author Shelly Ungemach take "baby steps" in their support of justice as they cross into the grounds of Fort Benning.*

place with all the sinkholes?"

It's too small a world! Hershey Park *was* my summer employment for two summers and Palmyra *is* the small town full of sinkholes where I lived the first 18 years of my life.

Then this still-smiling man handed me a ban and bar letter, which stated I was being ejected from Fort Benning for criminal trespassing and banned for a year. My picture was taken and that was it—I had been processed.

By the time it was all said and done, the sun had set and so I ate my army-supplied supper in the growing dusk, whipped by the cold wind and my mind awhirl with difficult questions, such as "What did I accomplish?" and "What else am I going to do to speak out against the injustice in this world?" This shouldn't be an end but a beginning, a beginning of a life-long commitment to speak for the silenced, to cry for the forsaken, and to work toward creating God's Kingdom here on earth.

For me, where to start is a paralyzing question lurking everywhere I turn. I do know that crossing that line wasn't as hard as I thought it would be. And this leads me to believe that saving the world doesn't begin with huge actions but rather with little, tiny commitments that add up to a mountain.

Note to self—Start taking those baby steps.

Shelly Ungemach, a member of Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, attends Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. She has studied liberation theology as well as Latin American history, language and culture.

"Funeral" procession. *Some of the SOA protesters (above) participate in a symbolic funeral procession onto the Fort Benning grounds.*

(Left) A street theater production of the assassinations that are attributed to SOA graduates.

respect toward all people we encounter, including police officers and workers.

- We will not damage property.
- We will not bring or use drugs or alcohol.
- We will not run or use threatening motions.
- We will carry no weapons.

"God had a hand in where I went," said Ungemach, explaining why she crossed the line. The Palmyra (Pa.) Church of the Brethren member added, "I'm looking forward to sharing my experience with my church."

When asked why he planned to cross the line, Musselman, of Roanoke, Va., quoted the saying on his shirt, first spoken by Martin Luther King Jr.—"The greatest sin of our time is not the few who destroy, but the vast majority who have stood idly by."

"I'm not crossing the line to get arrested," Musselman said, "but I have no ill feelings with that result of my action. I've been inspired by a God who stands on the side of the oppressed and the poor."

School of the Americas-related resources available from the Washington Office include "School of the Americas," a book by Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, and "School of the Americas: An Insider Speaks Out," a video with Joe Blair, a retired Army major and former SOA instructor. For more information, contact the office at (202) 546-3202 or at WashOfc@AOL.Com.

Also participating in what organizers called an "act of holy obedience" were about 15 other Church of the Brethren or related demonstrators from Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind., Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind., and from Massachusetts. Some were vocal in their decision not to cross the line, like Josh Kline, a Manchester College student who had worked closely with SOA watch while an intern at the Church of the Brethren Washington Office.

"I can do more in a long-term profession than in a one-time (civil disobedience) experience; health care expansion is equally important," Kline said.

Greg Laszakovits, a Bethany student, said he was "not sold on the political power of crossing over," but wanted to be "a voice within the church that would rally support (to close the school)."

After protesters crossed the line, SOA officials organized a press conference with Roy Trumble, SOA commandant. Trumble took issue with the religious motivation of the vigil, stating to International News Services, "This is not a religious issue. It's not a moral issue. This is a political issue and it will be decided by our own politicians. I certainly hope that the school is not closed down as a result of what I think is an ill-directed movement against the school."

In sharp contrast, Debbie Miller, representing the Bethany Peace Studies delegation, said, "We feel the SOA is contrary to Christ's teachings. We throw up our hands and want to pretend we are not of the world ... we may not be holding the gun, but by doing nothing and by being silent we are behind the assassins."

The continued existence of the SOA is also contrary to the General Board's stance, which this past July passed a resolution calling for the closing of the school.

An attempt to close the SOA by cutting funds came close to passing in the US House in September—210 to 217. SOA Watch, hoping to build on that near-miss, is urging people to contact their US legislators asking for their support of H.R. 611—a House bill to close the school; S. 980 would do the same in the Senate.

Do phone calls, letters, and physical protests make a difference? At the demonstration, Carol Richardson explained to protesters her conversation with one congressional representative, an unlikely supporter of SOA closure. In explaining why he voted to close the SOA in September, he said, "Well, you see, there's this monastery in my district ...."

What if our representatives would say, "Well, you see there's this Church of the Brethren in my district ...."

If only more of us would show our concern, we could close the SOA.

Heather Nolen, a Brethren Volunteer Service worker, is serving as coordinator of the Church of the Brethren Washington Office.

stepping STONES

by Robin Wentworth Mayer

The system of the Law, like computers, can only condemn my faults and ignore my efforts. Grace, on the other hand, can forgive my faults and understand my efforts.

"But you see, ma'am, the computer don't know...."

Usually I let such things slide. Usually I don't consider it my place to correct the grammar of other adults. Usually I just grit my teeth and remind myself that a small error in verb conjugation doesn't destroy the intended meaning of the sentence. Usually.

This time however my level of frustration had long since surpassed my threshold of tolerance....

"Doesn't know," I interrupted her. "The computer doesn't know."

There was just a split second of confused silence, then she went on: "Yes ma'am, like I said, the computer don't know that you've been paying more than the scheduled loan amount and it just went ahead and sent you your coupon book for next year's payments."

Several months previously I had purchased a new television set. Since the financing was interest-free for twelve months, I opted to take advantage of it. Even though the payments were based upon the assumption of a two-year loan, I had conscientiously been paying enough extra every month to make sure I would have the entire amount paid off within twelve months. The fact that the computer didn't know that was exactly why I was so upset!

I am not anti-technology. While computers intimidate me, I respect them and I've learned to use and appreciate them. I don't know if I even remember how to write without a word processor! No, I like computers just fine and would hate to have to navigate the complexities of our high-tech world without one.

It's just that, like my experience with the finance company so dramatically illustrates, computers don't know me and the particular circumstances of my situation. They don't know how to respond to my needs and efforts...only how to run their program.

They also don't "know" the fine-tuning of communication. I received a letter recently from an organization wanting to know if we would be having a "church bizarre." While "spell check" is a grand invention, it is certainly no respecter of homonyms. It will tell us whether or not a word is spelled correctly. It won't tell us whether or not that word makes sense in context.

Computers also don't acknowledge individual identity. Just last week I helped my son type his autobiography. Since he included first, middle, and last names of all five brothers, two parents, and four grandparents, it took a long time to get through the spell check because the computer doesn't "think" that names are words. That same document contained another error the computer couldn't catch: Brandon stated at one point that he loved "fiend trips." While that may well be a correct statement, it was supposed to be "field trips."

And I suppose that's what it all boils down to: When it comes to programming, computers ruthlessly employ the letter of the law. Which is the same thing we find under the Old Covenant.

The Old Testament Law made no provision for unique circumstances, no acknowledgment of individuality, no margin for error. It was, quite literally, set in stone. The New Covenant, however, is not set in stone, but rather signed in blood. While stone is hard, cold, and unyielding, blood is fluid, warm, and alive. Centuries ago the apostle Paul tried to make the Christians at Corinth understand this when he wrote: "...for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

The system of the Law, like computers, can only condemn my faults and ignore my efforts. Grace, on the other hand, can forgive my faults and understand my efforts. Which is exactly why the Word became flesh.

"I realize the computer doesn't know I've been paying ahead." (I said this with a pretty good imitation of patience.) "I'm calling because I need to know if there exists a record of my additional payments."

"Oh yes, ma'am! I have it all right here in your file."

I'm glad there was a personal backup for my financial account and it was not totally at the mercy of a computer system. Likewise, I'm glad there's a personal God behind my spiritual account and my soul is not at the mercy of a legalistic system.

Robin Wentworth Mayer is pastor of Kokomo (Ind.) Church of the Brethren.

Stepping Stones is a column offering suggestions, perspectives, and opinions —snapshots of life—that we hope are helpful to readers in their Christian journey. As the writer said in her first installment, "Remember, when it comes to managing life's difficulties, we don't need to walk on water. We just need to learn where the stepping stones are."

Tom Grance

The church is
Moderato
works to

BY FLETCHER FARRAR

Since August when she assumed the title of moderator of the Church of the Brethren, Elaine Sollenberger of Everett, Pa., has immersed herself in the role, keeping up a full travel schedule that included attendance at six district conferences in the fall, Annual Conference planning meetings in Orlando, committee meetings in Baltimore and elsewhere, and numerous trips to Elgin. When she's home her phone stays busy with the role of conciliator she has taken on. In that role, she organized a major symposium on Korea and the global mission philosophy held in Elgin in December, a meeting that may become a model for resolving differences within the church.

This wasn't what Sollenberger had planned to do this year. But when the phone rang in her Pennsylvania home on the Sunday before Annual Conference last summer, she quickly realized that this was not just a call but a Call. On the line was then-moderator David Wine, who explained that for health reasons moderator-elect Jimmy Ross would be unable to serve as moderator for the coming year. The Annual Conference officers had worked with the nominating committee of Standing Committee to recommend her, and Standing Committee agreed. Wine asked if she would accept the call.

"It came not only as a shock, but as a real challenge to know what to do," she recalled months later. She asked how long she had to decide. "Eighteen to twenty-four hours," Wine replied.

She had held the position eight years before, presiding over the 1989 Annual Conference. Prior to that she served as chair of the General Board. So she had been fully involved in the issues before; this time she would be thrust into the middle of things after having been away from denominational business for a number of years.

What has changed? At that time the denomination was considering a major restructuring proposal; now it is implementing a different plan. "Many of the same issues that troubled us now troubled us then," she says. A global mission philosophy was debated then, was approved and revised twice since, and the issue is still hotly debated. "We were struggling financially then and we're struggling financially now. And the sexuality issue is still with us." Orlando was the site of Annual Conference when she was moderator before; this year Brethren will return to a bigger, busier Orlando.

we rather than *they*
Elaine Sollenberger
bring us together

Those may have been among the thoughts that went through her head when she was asked to serve. But ultimately her decision was simple. "It seemed any reason or excuse that I could come up with to say no—and there were a number of them—I could not defend any of them," Sollenberger says. "Here was a serious illness that prevented somebody from doing something. Generally when you're asked to help someone in time of need or trouble, you say yes if you can."

So she said yes, and felt pleased to have been asked. "It was certainly a very affirming time for me, to have this come to me in that way."

"I don't understand what really is meant by liberal and conservative…. I do understand what 'we' and 'they' mean, and for me that's worse."

Sollenberger has said for years that to be called by the church to serve feels much better than winning a contested election. " I have strong feelings about the way we call people to serve," she says. "An election means competition in which one person usually wins over another person. In the case of Annual Conference officers, we start out with four candidates and then eliminate seventy-five percent of those people in order to get one that will serve. I just don't like the idea of making some people winners and others losers. It has diminished our leadership pool. It has denied many people with gifts of leadership the opportunity to use those, and for the church to benefit."

Congregations ought to examine the issue too. "At the congregational level we sit with our friends and sometimes our relatives in a business meeting and with a few pencil strokes we eliminate or we affirm. When you get to a position through that process, do you rejoice? You want to because you want to serve. But in your rejoicing you're probably not thinking about the disappointment of someone else who probably would have done just as well but was not successful in

Barrier-breaking moderators. *Elaine Sollenberger became the first woman moderator in 1989 when she succeeded Bill Hayes.*

Phil Grout

getting one more vote than you did."

How would it work? Who decides who gets called? "It's not for me to design the process," she says, but it could work if the church diligently designed the process. "We have people who work at calling out four. Why not work at calling out one instead?" She agrees that mistakes could be made. Jesus called Judas after all. But mistakes are made in elections too.

As she said, she has strong feelings. Does that make her a radical? "I'd rather be labeled a radical than a conservative or a liberal," she said. She is frustrated by discussions in some parts of the church that divide people by means of labeling. "I don't understand what really is meant by liberal and conservative. I know what the perception is but I'm not sure about the real understanding."

There are worse labels. "I do understand what 'we' and 'they' mean, and for me that's worse than liberal and conservative." Several times in the interview Sollenberger returned to this subject, as though her goal as moderator is to get more Brethren to talk about the larger church in terms of "we" rather than "they." When she addresses district conferences and "brings greetings" from the larger church, she explains she's really bringing them greetings from themselves. She wishes the polity that allows each church to have a voting delegate at Annual Conference would make more feel a part of the "we." "That just has not worked as well as it should I think."

One of the challenges ahead is for the church to "deal creatively" with the redesigned General Board staff structure approved by Annual Conference last year. She said so far there is more confusion about the redesign than criticism of it. "I think for the most part we're trying to work with it." At district conferences she has heard a lot of questions about the General Board's new congregational

Interagency Forum:
Can Annual Conference become more of a hub?

How do the various agencies of the denomination stay in touch with each other? And how has the General Board's redesign affected them?

These are questions facing the Interagency Forum (IAF), a group begun in August of 1996 and given formal life by Standing Committee at last year's Annual Conference. The IAF is made up of the board chairs and CEO's of Brethren Benefit Trust, General Board, and Bethany Theological Seminary, plus the Annual Conference officers.

"We just needed a formalized time to sit down and talk with each other," said former moderator David Wine, who called the group together the first time. He had noticed during his three years as chair of the General Board before being elected moderator-elect that the various groups had a "lack of trust and good solid communication." The IAF has met quarterly for a year and a half now, and has additional meetings scheduled for March and June. Standing Committee designated the immediate past moderator to chair the group each year, so Wine serves in that capacity now.

In addition to its job of aiding communication between groups, the IAF was given an assignment by Standing Committee: to report on how the General Board's redesign has affected agencies of the church other than the General Board, including the IAF members. "So this year we're looking at the organizational structures of the total church, not just the General Board," Wine said. "The General Board redesign is done. We're not redesigning that redesign by any means. But any time one organization redesigns itself, it has effects for many others. It's like a mobile hanging on the ceiling. If you move one part it moves all of them." The IAF intends to report its findings to Standing Committee in Orlando next summer.

"One of the things we feel, especially the Annual Conference officers, is that the General Board has downsized itself, and changed the position descriptions enough, particularly at the executive director level, that the General Board can no longer be the only unifed board of Annual Conference. It's more obvious now than it has ever been. There is a need for Annual Conference to become more of a hub or a center for the church."

Wine said it is unclear how that might work because Annual Conference now has a modest budget and staff, geared primarily toward putting on the actual week-long conference each year.

Perhaps church archives will be searched for answers. "We've moved back to a pre-1946 model, where there are multiple boards of Annual Conference," Wine said. "Now you have the possibility of ABC and OEPA and perhaps other agencies wanting to report to Conference as well. Everything we did prior to 1946 to make a change to one unified board is no longer there. That's clear. And yet it's not pre-1946 in terms of paradigms of society. So how does the church move in a concerted way in the midst of all these changes?"

Stay tuned.–F.F.

life teams. "We have not yet caught up with what it means for us."

Is there any danger that the new congregational life teams will be oversold and unable to live up to their billing? "I'd rather over-expect than the opposite," Sollenberger replied. "We're grasping for something. We tend to shrug off what we don't expect to be very useful." She said there is concern in several areas of the country about whether there will be enough congregational life staff positions to adequately cover the territory.

The goal, she said, is "to get the congregations to feel that they are bigger than themselves or even their districts, that somehow we lift our vision beyond our own home base." She hopes to avoid the danger that many have perceived in the

Elaine and Ray Sollenberger *in their home church, the Everett (Pa.) Church of the Brethren. The congregation has been "extremely supportive."*

Tom Grance

At home in Pennsylvania

Soon after Elaine Sollenberger accepted an appointment to fill the unexpired term on the board of New Bedford (Pa.) county commissioners in 1995, she became involved in a smelly political battle. In a fight over control of a landfill, she became the swing vote to decide who would operate the regional garbage dump. There was a lot of political pressure from all sides, but her vote resulted eventually in successful reform of the facility. Now two years after her short stint on the board was completed, the county is selling the landfill to a private owner, which is what Sollenberger thought should happen all along. Sometimes it takes years to see the results of faithful work in public affairs.

But successful reform on one project provides strength to plunge into the next controversy, as Sollenberger has done by accepting an appointment to the Bedford County (Pa.) Redevelopment Authority. That group is currently trying to save a historic hotel, an effort opposed by powerful interests. "We're in litigation up to our ears," said Sollenberger. In fact, a judge has issued a gag order so no one involved can talk about the project.

Whether leading the Church of the Brethren prepared her for Pennsylvania local politics, or vice versa, it is clear that Sollenberger has plenty of experience at the center of controversy. And that experience serves her well as the moderator of a contentious church.

Strong support from her family and her congregation help her in her moderator role as well. She and her husband, Ray, are both semi-retired from the family dairy farm, which they operated together for many years and where they still live. The Jersey dairy operation is now managed by daughter Lori Knepp, who currently serves as vice chair of the Church of the Brethren General Board and has served as acting chair during Chris Bowman's illness. Lori and her husband, Rex Knepp, a computer systems operator for a paving company, have one daughter, Morgan. Elaine's other daughter, Beth Sollenberger Morphew, lives in Elgin, Ill., where she serves on the General Board staff as a congregational life team coordinator. She and her husband, Tim, a personnel outplacement counselor, have two children, Keith and Craig. The Sollenbergers' son, Leon, moved last summer from Pennsylvania to Hawaii, where he is pioneering a corn silage growing operation on the island of Oahu. He hopes to cut down on the amount of feed needed to be imported for feeding Hawaii dairy herds.

It is a remarkable family that provides three women to top leadership positions in the denomination at the same time. "I'm pleased about all of that," says the mother and moderator. "But we would never have put this together in this way." She says the three have worked to keep their areas of church responsibility separate from family affairs. "Nobody would have planned this in their best or worst moments."

About five miles from the farm is the Everett Church of the Brethren, where the Sollenbergers worship with about 200 others, and where Elaine has been active as an adult Sunday school teacher and a music leader. Both times Elaine Sollenberger has been moderator, in 1989 and this year, her home congregation has made deliberate efforts to support her—by signing up to pray for her a week at a time and by providing space in the newsletter for news of her travels. "They stop me and ask me how things are going, where I'll be next," she said. "They're very much interested and extremely supportive." How does being moderator affect her attendance at her home church? "If they kept attendance I'd be out."–F.F.

Nevin Dulabaum

Symposium on Korea. *Sollenberger with moderator-elect Lowell Flory at the December 1997 symposium she called to air differences on global mission philosphy.*

redesigned church structure—that it will mean congregations will turn inward and forget about the world beyond. "Our leadership is going to have to help us to see ourselves as part of the global community." She said some congregations already have a global vision and some are involved in urban ministries. "Yet as a denomination we have not seemed to do as well with that as we had expected we would."

Is there a new role ahead for Annual Conference as an institution? Might that body take on a larger role in the day-to-day activities and operations of the denomination?

Sollenberger says she is "interested in the conversations" regarding a larger role for Annual Conference, but she sees practical difficulties. Would the moderator be given more to do? "I don't know how I'd handle that much more." Would an expanded role rule out having a moderator who has full-time employment?, she asks. Would Standing Committee need to meet two or three times a year? How much would that cost?

As she does with other questions facing the church, Sollenberger will willingly plunge into the middle of the problem and try to figure out what God wants done. The focus of Annual Conference 1998 is faithfulness, centering on Hebrews 11, which recalls the biblical figures whose faith shaped history. She's hoping the theme will challenge the church to faithfully plunge ahead together.

She recalls the Greek mythological figure of Sisyphus, who was doomed forever to roll a heavy stone uphill, only to have it always roll back down. "There are times when I think that's what happens to us in the church. Somebody gets a good forward-looking idea and gets this rock moving up the hill. Then he or she is labeled as a liberal and it rolls back downhill. I would hope we could just become more able to accept each other as we are and let some of these rocks get to the top."

Brethrening

Buried treasure

The Bible school lesson for kindergartners at the Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin was the parable of the buried treasure in Matthew.

After the story, the children eagerly dug through a big bucket of sand to find small toys the teacher had buried for them. Then they filed to a sink in the hall to wash their hands before having a snack.

While I was turning on and off the water and dispensing paper towels to the happy, dirty crew, 6-year-old Stephanie gave a determined yank on my shirttail. I looked down to see her standing silently beside me trying to draw a breath and making panicked gestures. She couldn't breathe. I called for Mike, the other adult helper, who immediately scooped Stephanie up in his great big arms and squeezed her several times in the middle. His modified Heimlich maneuver was gentle enough to keep from crushing her ribs, but strong enough to dislodge the obstruction in her throat.

When the air rushed in, Stephanie looked up at us with big tears and said, "My quarter!" She had swallowed the little offering she brought for Bible school! No matter, said the doctor in the emergency room later. He assured her she would eventually find her "buried treasure."—JULIE GARBER

MESSENGER *would like to publish other short, colorful, and humorous stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submission to* MESSENGER, *Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at fffarrar@midwest.net.*

Justice? Or just us?

Another way of living in solidarity with the poor

I offer the following possible implications of a life lived with a fuller view of God's blessing. I intend for these to be read as food for thought and not as a recipe for faithful living.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVID RADCLIFF

People around the world are remarkably similar, given the wide range of colors and shapes we come in. People everywhere enjoy laughter and play, respond to ritual and rhyme, and are generally willing to put in a decent day's labor. Yet there are wide disparities in the way people in different places are able to enjoy life or be rewarded by their work. Indeed, a vast number of the world's people struggle to survive, living without access to adequate food, water, medical care, education, and just about anything else beyond life itself. For many, even this precious commodity is at risk, as some 35,000 children die each day around the world from hunger-related causes. Countless others have so little of the earth's goods at their disposal that they are consigned to

Children are among those most directly affected *by the concentration of the world's wealth in the hands of a few. Some 250 million children around the globe work for a living in fields and along roads and in factories, often for a few cents a day. Education is a luxury many cannot afford.*

Some one billion of the world's nearly six billion people live on less than a dollar a day. *Feeling the pinch, this Guatemala family needed to sell its newly acquired hogs. "There is not enough grain for both the children and the pigs," the father lamented. How can you get ahead if you can't catch up?*

endless routines whose only objective is to simply ensure survival for another day.

In the meantime, other people on this same planet enjoy lives of luxury unimaginable to their less fortunate neighbors. Each of the world's upper class consumes 60-100 times more material goods than those in the survival class. They can expect to live 15-20 years longer. Their children are 10 times more likely to survive childhood. While in many places medical care is still not universally offered, for most in the upper class it is state-of-the-art. For significant numbers of these privileged ones, the struggle is not for adequate food, but for restraint from consuming too much. Meanwhile, as much as 30 percent of their food production is wasted in the field, in storage, or as garbage.

Those of us in the Christian tradition affirm that God created the earth and its bounty. In a previous article [See "Johnny Appleseed got it wrong," November 1997], I suggested that this bounty was intended to be shared by the earth's people, enabling them to live in fullness and health. Indeed, we can turn to biblical institutions such as the Sabbath year and the jubilee year to point us in this direction. The Sabbath year reminds us that the earth itself is not to be taxed beyond replenishment, and should have a periodic reprieve from humanity's relentless consumption. The jubilee year was provided to assure that the earth's sustenance was not effectively hoarded by the fortunate or the few—or even the economically astute.

Other biblical texts likewise press the faith community to share the blessing and to refrain from over-accumulation. Manna provided sustenance for each according to their need. People without means of support—widows, orphans, strangers—were to be provided for by the community in which they reside. And everyone, from members of the faith community to poor non-believing neighbors, was to be treated with justice and compassion in economic dealings.

Jesus's own teachings resonate with these themes, adding to them the call to sacrificial love for others, his own example of deep concern for people's physical and social well-being, an overall warning about the lure of material prosperity, and the longing for God's kingdom to come "on earth as it is in heaven."

How, then, has the earth been apportioned in the way that it has? In the earlier article, I proposed that our understanding of the nature of blessing was at least in part responsible. If we begin to understand God's blessing in a different way—as intended for all people—what then does this mean in day to day life?

Generally, I tend to shy away from such prescriptions, as I believe is the case in the scriptures in general, and particularly the New Testament. Our daily dealings spring from our deeper commitments to Christ as Lord and Savior. I likewise don't readily fall in behind those who claim to be able to derive sets of "biblical principles" that hold true for all time's sake. Our faith—and the work of the Spirit—seems much too dynamic for this.

Look for the path of least impact in any daily action. How can we do what we do with the least negative consequence for God's earth and its ability to sustain humankind?

Nevertheless, I offer the following possible implications of a life lived with this fuller view of God's blessing. I intend for these to be read as food for thought and not as a recipe for faithful living.

What's fair is fair. I often wonder what "my fair share" of the earth's bounty is. If the earth can only provide so much sustenance for its human residents, are we willing to live within our quota? For example, the total amount of available productive land in the world comes out to about 3 acres per person. Yet an average of 10 acres per person is required to support the lifestyle of the typical US citizen. Could my family live on our fair share of the earth's productive capacity? Who is doing with less so that we can enjoy more?

Enough is enough. Along with everyone else in our society, Christians can be lured into a consuming frenzy by wily advertisers. And most of us tend to spend just about—or just beyond—what our income allows. Do we have the spiritual discipline to live beneath our means and to turn away from the false promise of the "things equal happiness" equation? There is a true sense of liberation in being able to peruse a sales flyer and find nothing of interest. How often are we able to do this?

Question prosperity. When we find ourselves in a significantly privileged position relative to the world around us, we must be willing to ask why. For instance, when the stock market booms, it usually means that the corporate profit picture looks good. Why is this? Sweatshop laborers in another country? More layoffs at home? More efficient extraction of the earth's bounty? Military support of authoritarian regimes that keep their workers from seeking higher wages? And when our fields continue to bear bountifully, is it due to our wise stewardship of the soil, or from over dependence on chemical fertilizers and other practices that are not sustainable over the long term? It is difficult to question one's own prosperity.

Think ahead. What will be the impact of our consumption on our children and our children's children? Do we care if the earth someday buckles under the weight of our polluting and consuming ways? Will each of us depart this earth with a net deficit—having used much more than our share, while having done too little to replenish? Or are we taking care to leave as a legacy an earth with no less bounty than we inherited from our ancestors?

Less is more. Look for the path of least impact in any daily action. How can we do what we do with the least negative consequence for God's earth and its ability to sustain humankind? It's in the small things that the battle is joined—the car, the thermostat, the thrown-away bottle, the thoughtless purchase.

Get involved. There are ways to actively work to see that God's blessing is shared far and wide—which is how I believe God wants it to be. In our own church, programs are in place that provide economic opportunities for people in poverty, assist in restoring the environment, advocate for fairer laws and government policies, and proclaim the gospel of justice and peace. Join these efforts.

Stand alone together. While we pride ourselves on individuality, we constantly seek the affirmation of the crowd. Living a different way will set us at odds with society, both inwardly and outwardly. This, however, is the price that needs to be paid if we are to strike out in a different direction. The beauty of Christian community is that if we do this together, we are not by ourselves when we stand alone.

Stop, look, and listen. Remember that in the end our lives are not sustained by our constant pursuit of prosperity. Indeed, our faith tells us that this is almost certain to do our lives in—and adversely affects the lives of many others. God provides. We must take time to reflect on this provision, and live like we believe it. There is joy and satisfaction for those who do. And the opportunity for God's blessing to be extended to the far reaches of the earth, which is right where it belongs.

David Radcliff is director of Brethren Witness on the General Board staff.

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Hope for the middle-class malaise

A new book says church financial problems are linked to its overworked, stressed-out members

BY FLETCHER FARRAR

The Crisis in the Churches: Spiritual Malaise, Fiscal Woe, by Robert Wuthnow. Oxford University Press, 1997. 291 pages. $30.

At last October's General Board meeting, a budget-weary board member mused aloud: "Wouldn't it be great if we had a new program like Adventure in Mission?" She acknowledged she was too young to have actually experienced the program but she'd heard such good things about it. Some of us in the room who had joined in that "Adventure" nodded in agreement. Yes, it would be great. Because Adventure in Mission wasn't about fundraising. It was about stewardship, about giving, about changing our lives.

A new book by Robert Wuthnow, sociologist at Princeton University, similarly urges churches to keep the stewardship message alive, not just for the benefit of the institution of the church which needs the money, but also, even primarily, for the benefit of its members who need to give. *The Crisis in the Churches: Spiritual Malaise, Fiscal Woe* is not alone in tracing the roots of church financial difficulties to spiritual problems. But in this analysis, the root spiritual problem is not that the church has gone astray by leaning left or right or endorsing some unpopular cause. The spiritual problems are rather with middle-class church members who feel trapped in a materialistic lifestyle with stressful jobs and too many bills to pay.

The problem facing churches

Even though a noticeable few churches seem to be thriving, the overall economic condition of churches is dismal. According to Wuthnow, "churches are experiencing an unparalleled economic crisis." Revenues are dropping off, especially when giving is adjusted for inflation or considered in relation to family incomes. A Champaign, Ill., group called Empty Tomb reports that religious giving as a percentage of family income has been on a downward course for the past two decades, dropping from an average of 3.1 percent in the late 1960s to 2.5 percent in the early 1990s. They say this represents a loss of approximately $2.8 billion annually.

The percentages of income that people give are declining at a time when family incomes are no longer growing. There are fewer and fewer members of churches. And the church population is aging, meaning there are more and more retired people, more fixed incomes, and fewer people giving at the same levels they did before.

So the local church suffers. Salaries and building costs are always under pressure. Cost-cutting measures are implemented, resulting in lowered morale among members and staff. And denominational programs suffer too. Not just with the Church of the Brethren, but in other denominations as well, more money is being kept at the local level so it's not getting to the national church.

But in addition to making the case that the economic crisis facing churches is serious and growing, the author lays out some intriguing and hopeful potential solutions to the problem.

> *The number one problem facing churches in America today is not poverty but affluence. We are poor because we have so much.*

The problem is with the middle class

We know that the economy is growing. And we have a strong sense that our own church members have enough money on hand to make churches grow and thrive if they would only fork it over. So we begin to ask why people don't give more than they do. One frustrated pastor is quoted here complaining that his middle-class congregation didn't feel motivated to give to the poor because they think they are the poor.

In a way he's right. It has been said that the number one problem facing churches in America today is not poverty but affluence. We are poor because we have so much. "Affluenza" is the spiritual disease that affects us all in strange ways, while most of us don't know we have it. This is not to say we are fabulously wealthy. The majority of church members in America today belong to the middle class. The median household income for church members is about $45,000, which is probably enough to satisfy most families' needs and still leave enough room for donations to charity.

But to get this $45,000 many church members experience extraordinary demands on their time and money. Two-thirds of all church members who are employed work more than 40 hours a week. Most of them say they have little or no energy left over for other things when they come home from work. The jobs they spend all that time at are not so great either. About a third say they are dissatisfied with their jobs. About half complain of high pressure, extreme competition, or lack of opportunities for advancement. More than half say they experience significant amounts of stress on the job.

And stress at home. The reason so many keep those jobs they don't like is because they have too many bills to pay. Seventy percent of employed church members say they have worried in the past year about how to pay their bills. Virtually all church members admit to wishing they had more money. And more time.

It is a real dilemma. We know as members of the middle class we enjoy tremendous resources. We have education, jobs, nice houses, plenty of food, good schools for our kids, and freedom from fear and violence. But at the same time we feel overburdened with too much work and too many bills. We suffer from stress and anxiety. We wonder what is wrong. Sometimes, though not often, we may even turn to our churches for answers.

What the churches are saying about work

According to this study, most churches and most pastors don't feel adequate or comfortable addressing the economic part of our lives. So they say little about work or money. And that's just fine with many of us, who don't want our pastors to meddle in our financial affairs. We may report at church the details of our upcoming surgery, but if we're worried about losing our jobs or paying our bills we keep quiet because we feel we're supposed to have such things under control.

Pastors may have a sense that not all is well at work. So they preach about work, but do so in confusing and conflicting ways. They sometimes emphasize the work ethic, and remind us that God expects us to have a high level of commitment to our work. From this we get the idea that God loves us more if we work hard. And then pastors emphasize happiness, that God wants us to be happy in all that we do. The dual messages of commitment and happiness may not seem contradictory until they are heard by somebody who is already experiencing stress and burnout on the job. Does God want me to be committed to my work? Or does God want me to be happy?

Wuthnow says few pastors preach about the idea of calling or vocation. But this may be the key to a spiritual understanding of how work can become more satisfying. Churches can help us understand how our work can be our ministry, and that our work can help the poor, or contribute to the benefit of the environment, or alleviate suffering. To the extent that God's work can become our work, then our forty or fifty hours a week on the job can become more satisfying.

> *We have education, jobs, nice houses, plenty of food, good schools for our kids, and freedom from fear and violence. But at the same time we feel overburdened with too much work and too many bills.*

What the churches are saying about money

Clergy often get in trouble when they talk about money. So pastors tend to shy away from it, or mention it indirectly, or in conjunction with other less painful subjects. We are used to hearing things like, "Remember, God wants us to give of our time, talents, and resources." When our pastors do get around to talking about stewardship, it is indirect. "We are called to be faithful stewards of all of God's creation."

Now what exactly does that mean? It is understandable that parishioners might not catch on that the pastor is really trying to say, "We need you to put more money in the plate." The author makes a case for pastors to be more direct and explicit. But he is not calling for more explicit pleas for money so much as he is asking pastors to think clearly and talk frankly about the role of money and the concept of stewardship. They must realize that money is not only the solution, it is the problem as well. Only by seriously addressing the role of money in our lives can we gain the freedom and security to give freely.

When churches do get around to asking parishioners for money, it is sometimes put in terms that we should give out of gratitude for our abundance and our blessings. But that often doesn't connect with the congregation because many are up to their ears in credit card debt and don't feel abundant or blessed. Debt and other financial difficulties are spiritual problems of the middle class and must be addressed before people can feel free to give.

So how do churches do this? Several suggestions are offered.

1. By discussing stewardship more, not less. Stewardship implies "balance" in our lives. There was a time in American history when temperance and moderation were common watchwords of the religious community. It's time to bring them back.

2. By challenging the prevailing ideology of self-interest. The church may teach that we should moderate our personal desires and be generous because all we have is a gift from God.

3. By teaching financial responsibility. We can encourage each other to be prudent and keep track of God's resources that are entrusted to us.

4. By challenging the gospel of wealth. In subtle ways many of us subconsciously believe that the haves are better than the have-nots. One thing likely to make the church half as large yet twice as strong would be taking a harder look at the gospel of wealth.

5. By playing a pastoral role on concerns about money. Churches can be the source for support groups on unemployment, study groups on simple living, or seminars on financial concerns.

This author contends that by tackling money issues and money problems head-on churches can help their parishioners to be better givers. The idea is that becoming a better giver is a way to become a better person, not just a way to meet the church budget. Giving is an alternative to materialism and consumerism. It combats selfishness.

It is important to include in the message that giving doesn't make you a richer person, although some pastors preach that it does. The author quotes one pastor as saying if you shovel your wealth to God, God will shovel it back except he'll use a larger shovel. Another says it is more profitable to give than to receive. But this is dangerous doctrine, and implies a selfish motive for giving. The better message is that giving won't make you financially better off. If you give money, you have less money, but you have more of other forms of blessing.

Nor is giving always fun. God loves a cheerful giver, but if you wait for cheerfulness you'll only give when you're having a good day. Giving is a form of spiritual discipline. It requires effort and must be based on commitment. It is hard work. But it is also a matter of grace. It happens because of divine empowerment that facilitates and enriches the experience of giving.

Strategies for survival

The author is not suggesting ministering to the middle class as a neat fundraising trick. He is rather calling the churches to be faithful to their own members who are suffering greatly from serious pressures of flabby middle-class life. Churches must help their members to understand their work as ministry, to cope with stress and burnout, to keep their priorities straight, and to manage their resources with greater care. How we work and how we spend our money are serious moral issues on which the churches are often silent, and for this silence Wuthnow reserves his harshest criticism. "Clergy are reluctant to say much about anything for fear of offending or for fear of appearing stupid. People come away from their sermons as they might from a lecture on molecular biology–uplifted for having been exposed to something that makes no difference." By failing to address these issues, the church is doing little more than "making sin comfortable," he writes. He quotes a pastor: "Sin has a way of dulling our senses, and the church is interested in keeping its patrons coming and giving their money rather than calling them to holiness, calling them to reality, calling them to the fact that we worship a crucified God and not some superhero, and that there's a cost to discipleship, there's a cost to grace."

Churches must help their members to understand their work as ministry, to cope with stress and burnout, to keep their priorities straight, and to manage their resources with greater care.

He concludes that now is the time for churches to challenge young people to choose careers that will serve God and help other people rather than merely pay high salaries. And that churches should challenge the ethics of those who make large sums of money selling things that the public doesn't need or that harm the environment. Churches should help their members with the problem of juggling work and family commitments. The church, in short, has an obligation to challenge the middle class to lead unconventional lives of dedication, service, and sacrifice.

Brethrening

Pot pies

A spirit of generosity pervades the annual Disaster Relief Auction in Lebanon, Pa., which benefits the General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund and other regional organizations. It was held Sept. 26–27 at the Lebanon Area Fairgrounds. Last fall this auction spirit was best summed up by . . . pot pies.

An unidentified woman attending the auction with some friends had stood in a food line for herself and for those in her party. After a long wait, the woman finally got to the front of the line, and her food of choice—pot pies—was handed to her on a tray.

As she went to her seat, Dave Buckwalter, a local auctioneer who was auctioning on stage at the time, saw those pies pass by on their way to be devoured. In front of everyone, he asked if he could have a little for himself.

"You wouldn't have asked that if you knew how long I stood in line for these pies," she replied.

"If you stood in line that long," Buckwalter reasoned, "then they must be worth something."

Without hesitation, he began auctioning off the entire tray. Two hundred and eighty dollars later, the woman's place back in that food line was ensured!—Nevin Dulabaum

Messenger would like to publish other short, colorful, and humorous stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submission to Messenger, Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at fffarrar@midwest.net.

World Council of Churches

My prayer promise

BY DAVID WINE

David Wine of Abilene, Kan., served as Church of the Brethren Annual Conference moderator from 1996 to 1997. Following his consecration service at the Cincinnati Annual Conference in July 1996, Wine addressed conferencegoers. During that speech he vowed to pray an hour a day, a day a month, a week a year, and he challenged conferencegoers to join him.

So how did it go? Wine explains:

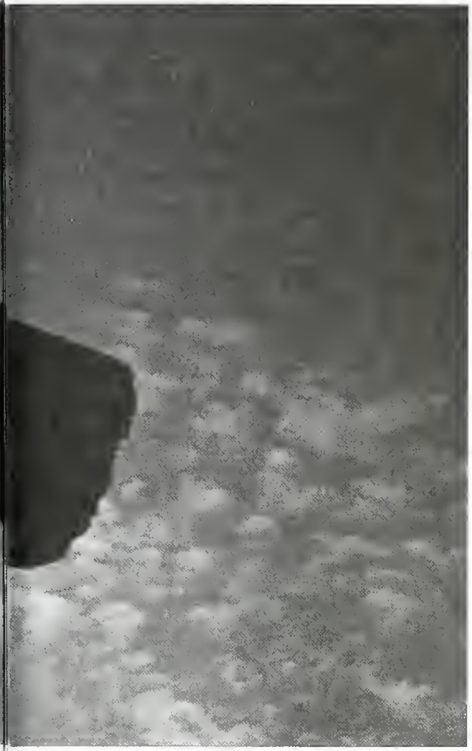
Prayer is a mighty force because it connects us in new ways so that God becomes our friend and parent, rather than a theory or concept.

In 1990, while undergoing a challenging period of time in my vocational life, I picked up a copy of Richard Foster's book *Celebration of Discipline*, a book I keep turning back to time and time again. The book challenged me to do more—much more—in the way of prayer, meditation, Bible study and practicing other Christian disciplines. I resolved to start practicing the spiritual disciplines in a new and concerted way.

I decided to covenant to be in prayer and communion with God an hour a day, a day a month, and a week a year. Consequently, my call for the Church of the Brethren membership to join me in that discipline last year was simply a continuation for me of a discipline I had been practicing for several years already. Its impact on my life encouraged me to want others to experience what I had discovered.

People often ask, "How have you done? Are you really able to do that?" I must respond yes and no. Yes, I have stayed with the covenant and I have been mostly successful at averaging the time committed. But do I miss a day or days? Surely! But, more importantly, I am also trying harder to live a life advocated by Brother Lawrence of being in the presence of God on a continual basis rather than only at set-aside times. I have discovered that is even more difficult!

You see, part of the reason I made the covenant with myself is that I am a spiritual babe. I need the discipline of set-aside time in order to stay in



communion with God. If I were more mature I would seek the goal of Brother Lawrence and make my conversations and presence with God a continual dimension of my life, not one that needed only set-aside time to achieve. I am working at making the times of prayer in my life no different in many respects from the other times of my life—all should be dedicated to God.

A second question often asked by Brethren this past year to me is "What difference has it made in your life?" My response is an immense one, but one that is more noticed in my inner life than recognized by others. I have, of course, told others that my family notices, and they do. I am nicer, calmer, more sensitive, better able to deal with the myriad "crises" that erupt from time to time. It might better be said my family can tell when I've neglected my spiritual life! The same could be said about my Mutual Aid Association office "family" as well.

Brother Lawrence wrote, "There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual conversation with God. Were I a preacher, I should above all other things preach the practice of the presence of God." I can't think of a better way to describe another result of a deeper prayer life. One begins to see things from God's point of view rather than our own. The world's viewpoint seems less attractive and often worldly matters almost seem repulsive to me when I'm doing my best at practicing the presence of God.

Some of the results of my focus on prayer life have been the following:

- I become slower to react defensively or angrily.
- I am more ready to forgive.
- I am better able to understand the radical nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ—otherwise it does seem as foolishness.
- Prayer helps convince me of God's existence and Christ's forgiveness.
- Prayer has made me more sensitive to others and the need to live in community.
- During prayer, God's creation almost burns in ecstasy at times!
- Prayer helps prioritize what really matters in life!
- Prayer helps make me a more sensitive husband, father, and manager.

This journey has also made me very aware that I knew a whole lot *about* God but that was much different than *knowing* God! We often confuse our God-talk and God-knowledge with faithfulness. Nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, Jesus condemned the religious leaders who knew all the law to the smallest detail yet failed to see its application in their daily lives.

We often succumb to the same trap. We study Christian doctrine, know what the scriptures say, and yet God remains distant and unreachable. We confuse knowledge with knowing. Knowing comes only through relationship, and relationship comes from conversation and listening. We have to know someone before we can love that person. Prayer is a mighty force because it connects us in new ways so that God becomes our friend and parent, rather than a theory or concept. M.

Letters

> *"I commend the* Messenger *editor for his excellent November editorial concerning the Redesign Program and I regret that, come December, Kermon Thomasson's editorials will be coming to an end."*

Glitches building a church

I commend the Messenger editor for his excellent November editorial concerning the Redesign Program and I regret that, come December, Kermon Thomasson's editorials will be coming to an end. As the mortician said to his departing assistant, "Good luck in whatever you may undertake."

Redesign of an organization can be done for many reasons, some of them good, some not so good. But it seems to me that a money crunch, such as our own, has got to be among the best of circumstances in which any organization can undergo redesign. A clear purpose for change (lack of money) is the best morale-booster available, for those who are required to live through the temporary chaos.

I see cause for concern, however, regarding our expectations for the reorganization plan. Some of these may be unreasonable. Will a new denominational structure lead to spiritual renewal? Not in and of itself. Or will our denomination be destroyed? Almost certainly not.

One certainty is that there will be some "glitches." When I was still a preschooler, my father pastored a congregation that built a new church building. The architect didn't run any heat to the nursery. He thought that, with heated rooms on all sides the nursery would stay warm. He was wrong.

But despite months of building committee meetings, at which the blueprints were repeatedly discussed, nobody ever noticed the problem until the new church was actually built and the nursery got cold.

Nobody is perfect. No one can always think of everything, because some problems remain hidden until other changes start to be made. Luckily, though, it is always much cheaper to fix "glitches" in a reorganization plan than to remodel a building.

Bill Bowser
Martinsburg, Pa.

From the On Earth Peace Assembly

Program Coordinator/ Development Associate

Church of the Brethren peace education organization located at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., is seeking a full-time Program Coordinator/Development Associate to begin work on Sept. 1, 1998. Responsibilities include carrying out OEPA's Peace Academy, Conflict Resolution Teams, Summer Peace Camp, Winter Inter-Term, and other peace education programs, as well as assisting with ongoing fund raising efforts.

Requirements
Bachelor's degree required. Some theological and program management experience preferred. Experience with computers, conflict resolution, mediation, and acceptance of the scriptural basis of biblical peacemaking strongly preferred.

Letters of application, résumé, and three references must be sent by March 31 to: Tom Hurst, OEPA, PO Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776-0188.

BVS

Three steps toward a better world

STEP 1: Pick one of the statements below
- ✓ I will write or call for my BVS application today.
- ✓ I will talk with ________about BVS and challenge them to apply.
- ✓ I will learn more about BVS by getting information about the program and then will share my new knowledge with at least one other person.

STEP 2: Say it out loud, preferably to another person.

STEP 3: DO IT!

For more information or an application form contact the Brethren Volunteer Service Office, (800)323-8039.

More on Johnny Appleseed

I want to thank Kermon Thomasson and David Radcliff for their attention to Johnny Appleseed in the November Messenger [See "Johnny Appleseed got it wrong"].

The Messenger arrived as I was trying to come up with a creative approach to an interfaith sermon I had been invited to preach for a community Thanksgiving service. After I read the November Messenger, Johnny Appleseed emerged as the central character of my sermon, not simply because "he got it wrong," but also because he got it right.

The "Johnny Appleseed Song" indeed affirms that it is the Lord who gives, yet this prayer-song ends oddly, even heretically! It ends not in the name of Lord Krishna or Lord Jesus, nor even in the name of Yahweh or Allah, but in the name of "Johnny Appleseed, Amen!" It ends in the name of a religious minoritarian, a dissenter and a heretic whose unorthodox work of planting apple trees contributed to the common good, reminding us that it is in the end "With Many Voices a Common Thanks."

Scott Holland, Pastor
Monroeville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren

Don't donate for killing

How can I work for peace if I pay for war? Is paying for murder less evil than pulling the trigger myself? Millions of Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Japanese, Salvadorans, Iraqis, Koreans, and Germans begged their gods to protect them as US bombers destroyed their homes and massacred their families. Some of the victims prayed to Jesus. Their tears and blood flowed amid their screams and moans while "Christians" in the United States paid taxes to build and fly the US bombers and sang every Sunday about God's love for all people.

The US military robs, tortures, terrorizes, and kills far more people than all the US street gangs, armed robbers, drug dealers, serial killers, and Mafia combined.

If someone comes to my door collecting money for a local gang to rob and kill my neighbors, would I donate? Would I donate even a dollar if I knew any of the money collected went to kill my neighbors—no matter if the rest of it went to feed the homeless and to build schools?

I keep my taxable income under the taxable level. For a sighted, single person under 65, the taxable level for 1997 is $6,800. I lived well in 1996 on $5,700.

I am glad to have no car, no big apartment or house, no luxury vacations in order to live under the taxable level. I prize living the truth as best I see it far more than I value unnecessary things. In order for the US to plunder and to massacre, two things are required from many citizens—silence and paying taxes. For 18 years I have paid no federal income tax and I sure as hell am not silent!

Don Schrader
Albuquerque, N.M.

CHECK OUT ARIZONA!

Community Church of the Brethren
111 N. Sun Valley Boulevard
Mesa, AZ 85207 (602) 357-9811
Sunday Services 10:15 AM

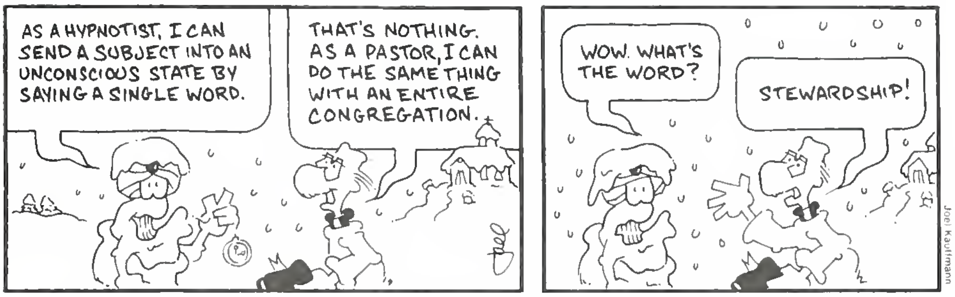
Glendale Church of the Brethren
7238 N. 61st Avenue
Glendale, AZ 85301 (602) 937-9131
Sunday Services 10:30 AM

Phoenix First Church of the Brethren
3609 N. 27th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85016 (602) 955-8537
Sunday Services 10:45AM

Tucson Church of the Brethren
2200 North Dodge Boulevard
Tucson, AZ 85716 (520) 327-5106
Sunday Services 10:30 AM

Pontius' Puddle

Send payment for reprinting "Pontius' Puddle" from Messenger *to Joel Kauffmann, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN 46526. $25 for one time use. $10 for second strip in same issue. $10 for congregations.*


AS A HYPNOTIST, I CAN SEND A SUBJECT INTO AN UNCONSCIOUS STATE BY SAYING A SINGLE WORD.
THAT'S NOTHING. AS A PASTOR, I CAN DO THE SAME THING WITH AN ENTIRE CONGREGATION.
WOW. WHAT'S THE WORD?
STEWARDSHIP!
Joel Kauffmann

Classified Ads

FOR SALE

Two poetry books by Ernestine Hoff Emrick for sale with photo illustrations by her father, E.G. Hoff. *Tall Thoughts: Poems for God* (70 religious poems, many previously published in Messenger) $7.00 plus $1.50 shipping. *Heaven Along the Way: Collected Poems* (134 poems compiled from forty years of awards and publishing) $10.00 plus $3.00 shipping. Both books $3.25 shipping. Add tax in Calif. Published by ULV Graphics (University of LaVerne). Order from Ernestine Hoff Emrick, 2780 Hillcrest Dr., LaVerne, CA 91750-4332.

TRAVEL

Cruise the waterways of Russia from Moscow to St. Petersburg. The tour (14 days) leaves Washington, D.C. (Dulles Intnl. Airport) on Sept. 4, 1998. An attractive price is available. For details contact the tour host, Dr. Wayne F. Geisert, President Emeritus, Box 40, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, VA 22812. Phone (540) 433-1433, or (540) 828-5494.

Travel with a purpose. Missionary journeys of St. Paul, Turkey, & Greece, Mar. 19–Apr. 3, 1998. $2,899. For info, write Wendell & Joan Bohrer, 8520 Royal Meadow Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46217. Tel./fax (317) 882-5067. Or write Paul & Geneva White, 3310 Melody Ave. SW, Roanoke, VA 24018-3114. Tel. (540) 776-3289.

Cruise the Russian waterways, Aug. 7–23, 1998. From $2,649, depending on deck level. Visit Moscow, Red Square, Kremlin, St. Petersburg, & cruise rivers of the czars, on 1st-class cruise ship. 3 meals a day. For info, write Bohrer Tours, 8520 Royal Meadow Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46217. Tel./fax (317) 882-5067.

Visit Spain and Portugal. May 29–June 4, 1998. Bus tour through countryside incl. Madrid, Cordoba, Seville, Granada, Toledo, Rock of Gibraltar, Fatima, and World Expo '98 in Lisbon. For more info, write: J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Rd., Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

INVITATION

Cincinnati Church of the Brethren fellowship meets for worship & support in n.e. area of Cincinnati. We welcome others to join us or bring needs to our attention. Contact us c/o Cincinnati Friends Meeting House, 8075 Keller Rd., Indian Hill. OH 45243. Tel. (513) 956-7733.

Come worship in the Valley of the Sun with Community Church of the Brethren at 111 N. Sunvalley Blvd., Mesa, AZ 86207. Mail to: 8343 E. Emelita Ave., Mesa, AZ 85208. Tel. (602) 357-9811.

Coming to Florida this winter? Come to Bradenton-Sarasota area. Good Shepherd Church of the Brethren invites you to share great worship celebrations, Sunday school, Saints Alive, Brethren bowling league, arts and crafts, quilting, tour groups, & great fellowship meals. Contact pastor Don White at (941) 792-9317 or 758-0988.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Vice President for Student Life. Goshen College seeks applicants for Vice President for Student Life beginning July 1, 1998. The candidate must have solid administrative and supervisory experience in an academic environment, the ability to budget carefully and an advanced degree (doctorate preferred) in an appropriate academic area. The Vice President for Student Life is on the President's Council, reports to the Provost and directs the Student Life Division. The successful candidate must be approachable, fair, enjoy students, work collaboratively within and across divisional lines, and be an advocate of the college in the community and the church. Strong writing and public speaking skills are required. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Applications from women and people from underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged. Send a letter of application, including philosophy statement concerning student life at a Christian liberal arts college, resumé, unofficial transcripts and three professional references to John D. Yordy, Provost, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526; telephone: (219) 535-7501; fax: (219) 535-7060; e-mail: provost@goshen.edu; website: http://www.goshen.edu. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

The Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups At Elizabethtown College invites applications and nominations for CENTER FELLOW, Fall 1998, Spring 1999, Summer 1999. Send inquiries to: David Eller, Director, The Young Center, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA 17022. Phone (717) 361-1470, Fax (717) 361-1443, e-mail—youngctr@acad.etown.edu

DIABETICS SERVICE

Diabetics: If you have Medicare or insurance, you could be eligible to receive your diabetic supplies at no cost. (Insulin-dependent only.) Call (800) 337-4144.

Turning Points

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation.

Akron, Akron, Pa.: Daniel Good, Clarence Brubaker, Jennifer Murphy, Joseph Morgan, Kevin Brubaker, Michael Hoshour
Bear Creek, Dayton, Ohio: Erin Erbaugh
Beaverton, Beaverton Mich., baptism: Theresa Coats
Brownsville, Brownsville, Md.: Sarah Cogle, Nathan Kaetzel, Jason Stocks, Michael Mills, Dan Crayton, Timmy Hagan, Charity Heffner, Lee Heffner, Chaz Himes, John Smith, Esther Kidwell, Cindy Bowers, Joel Bowers
Canton, Canton, Ill.: Mendy Kessler, Kasey Kessler
Champaign, Champaign, Ill.: Plippip Hansen, Shannon Davison
County Line, Champion, Pa.: Kattie Long
Donnels Creek, North Hampton, Ohio: Berneta DeMent, Betty Riley
Elizabethtown, Elizabethtown, Pa.: Dale & Lois Brown
Elkhart Valley, Elkhart, Ind.: Holli Halfhill, Michael Kennel
Elm Street, Lima, Ohio: Larry & Janice Biglow
First Central, Kansas City, Kan.: Matthew Eis, Michelle McTaggart
Friendship, Linthicum, Md.: Al Brocato, Rebecca Bowers, Lee Ann Butler, Allen Byers, Dawn Chamberlain
Good Shepherd, Blacksburg, Va.: Steve & Ellen Darden
Hooversville, Hooversville, Pa., by baptism: Elaine Karashowsky, Christopher Karashowsky, Anthony Karashowsky, Clara Koontz, Danielle Koontz, Dennis Koontz
Hope, Freeport, Mich.: Krista Posthumus
Maple Grove, Ashland, Ohio: Mark & Gale Andress, Lois Becker, Tim & Debbie Bernhard
McPherson, McPherson, Kan.: Darren & Shelly Hendricks
Mechanic Grove, Quarryville, Pa.: Krissie Kipp
Midland, Midland, Va.: Nathan Andrew Beahm, Hannah Ruth Beahm, Carol Lee Cornwell, Carrie Elizabeth Nell, Jennifer Slechta Curry
Myerstown, Myerstown, Pa.: Sara Keller, William Keller, Daniel Landis, Robert Dubble, Erin Hoffer, Eric Keller, Cole Martin, Travis Hibshman, Samuel Krall, Sherrie Keller, Crystal Keller, Lamar Fahnestock, Joanne Fahnestock, Crystal Hatt
Osceola, Osceola, Mo.: Martha Anderson
Pleasant Dale, Decatur, Ind.: Landon Adler, Jed Carter, Jon Geyer, Kipp Blake, Sarah Durnbaugh, Caleb Soldner
Pleasant View, Burkittsville, Md.: Patsy Vasquez, Earl & Joan Wean, Marie Chaney, Pastor Teri Greiser and Karen Greiser
Rockwood, Rockwood, Pa.: Tracey Carter, Pamela Lowery
Sebring, Sebring, Fla.: Gerald & Rosella Nelson
Sheldon, Sheldon, Iowa: Douglas Osterbuhr, Nancy Osterbuhr, Clint Osterbuhr
Syracuse, Syracuse, Ind.: Steve, Deb, Jason, Chris, & John Van der Reydon, Paul & Kim Davis
Thurmont, Thurmont, Md.: Dee Albright, Tammy Creager, Jennifer Lowe, Thad Bittner
Virden, Virden, Ill.: Lynne, Crystal, and Stephen Dunn
West Charleston, Tipp City, Ohio: Inoua Kodomalo, Mary Owen
West Eel River, Silver Lake, Ind.: John and Janice Teeter, Judy Enyeart
Yellow Creek, Goshen, Ind.: Garza, Agapita
York Center, Lombard, Ill.: Gail Clark, Karen Lease, Diane Mruk, Keith Mruk

227th BVS Orientation Unit

(Completed orientation in Bethel, Pa. Oct. 10.)

Nathan Backus, Lincoln Park, Mich., to Gould Farm, Monterey, Mass.
Barnhart, Andrea, Boones Mill, Va., to Community Family Life Services, Washington, D.C.
Burkhart, Raenya, Deer Isle, Maine, to Community of Hospitality-Café 458, Decatur, Ga.
Collett, Melissa, Upland, Calif. to Office of News & Information Services, Church of the Brethren General Offices, Elgin, Ill.
Copp, Miriam, Richland, Pa. to Su Casa Catholic Worker, Chicago, Ill.
Davidson, Karin, Lebanon, Pa., to Office of Brethren Witness, Church of the Brethren General Offices, Elgin, Ill.
Davies, David, Swansea, United Kingdom, to Boulder Hill Neighborhood, Montgomery, Ill.
Grimes, Kristin, Waynesboro, Pa., to Casa de Esperanza de los Niños, Houston, Texas
Hartmann, Geelke, Osterholz/Scharmbeck, Germany to Catholic Worker House, San Antonio, Texas
Hess, Ruth, Falls Church, Va., to Camp Bethel, Fincastle, Va.
Joseph, Megan, Onekama, Mich., to Casa de Esperanza de los Niños, Houston, Texas
Jossart, Cary, Racine, Wis., to Kilcranny House, Coleraine, N. Ireland
Knepper, Richard, Winter Garden, Fla., to ZSA, Poland
Kruft, Stephan, Rheinbrohl, Germany to Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.
Lehman, Jessica, Elgin, Ill., to N. Ireland Children's Holiday Scheme, Belfast, N. Ireland
Lucas, Troy, Anderson, Ind., to Brethren Woods, Keezletown, Va.
Mackie, Trina, Frankenmuth, Mich., to Pesticide Action Network, San Francisco, Calif.
Matthies, Cathi, Uslar, Germany, to Catholic Worker House, San Antonio, Texas
Nolen, Heather, Forest, Va., to Washington Office, Washington, D.C.
Platchek, Jeremy, Pottstown, Pa., to Camp Harmony, Hooversville, Pa.
Plate, Annika, Pinneberg, Germany, to Bridgeway, Lakewood, Colo.
Reich, Travis, New Hope, Va. to Washington City Soup Kitchen, Washington, D.C.
Risser, Gregory, Manheim, Pa., to Gould Farm, Monterey, Mass.
Stepp, Laura, Newport News, Va., to Pesticide Action Network, San Francisco, Calif.
Stiles, Robert, Hillsboro, Mo., to Catholic Worker House, San Antonio, Texas
Stover, Jennifer, Quinter, Kan., to Community of Hospitality-Café-458, Decatur, Ga.
Szymanska, Anna, Inowroclaw, Poland, to Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.
Wave, Bryan, Kaleva, Mich., to Interfaith Council/Homeless, Chicago, Ill.
Wood, Christopher, Charlottesville, Va., to Camp Myrtlewood, Myrtle Point, Ore.

Wedding Anniversaries

Bartlett, Dr. U.C. and Flossie, Uniontown, Pa., 55
Berkley, Clyde and Nancy, Danville, Va., 50
Blake, Victor and Irene, Elkhart, Ind., 55
Blevins, Donald and Wilda, Donnels Creek, S. Ohio, 50
Bowman, Fred and Wanda, Bridgewater, Va., 50
Bowman, James and Merle, Wenatchee, Wash., 60
Brandon, Louis and Jeanne, Goshen, Ind., 50
Eshleman, James and Helen, Fort Wayne, Ind., 50
Funderburg, Melvin and Wilda, New Carlisle, Ohio, 50
Gordon, Ralph and Joyce, Elkhart, Ind., 50
Greiner, Bob and Edna, North Manchester, Ind., 55
Groth, Norman and Esther, Independence, Western Plains, 50
Harbaugh, Merlin and Melba, Waterloo, Iowa, 50
Heisey, Enos and Jane, Lebanon, Pa., 55
Hettler, James and Marjorie, Silver Lake, Ind., 55
Higdon, Leonard "Pete" and June, Brownsville, Md., 50
Hoffer, Mildred and James, Ligonier, Pa., 50
Hoffman, Vern and Elsie, Sebring, Fla., 50
Hummel, Harry and Ethel, Sebring, Fla., 55
Jagger, William and Evelyn, Silver Lake, Ind., 55
McKay, Robert and Charlotte, Bridgewater, Va., 50
Michael, Norman and Amy, Churchville, Va., 50
Miller, Ray and Virginia, Waterloo, Iowa, 55
Myers, Martin and Virginia, Pitcairn, Pa., 50
Paff, Dr. William and Elizabeth, Elkhart, Ind., 60
Pratt, Joseph and Helen, Fresno, Calif., 60
Pratt, Ward and Mary, Fresno, Calif., 60
Rainey, Horace and Elizabeth, Portland, Ore., 60
Rhodes, Carl and Veda, Bridgewater, Va., 60
Rousselow, Leroy and Maxine, Waterloo, Iowa, 55
Snell, Phillip and June, Auburn, Ill., 50
Studebaker, Donald and Marcy, Donnels Creek, S. Ohio, 50
Wenger, Richard and Marjorie, Lorida, Fla., 50
West, Elmer and Marie, Corning, Iowa, 65
Whitmore, Elwood and Eva Lee, Bridgewater, Va., 55
Wiley, James and Betty, Independence, W. Plains, 50

Pastoral Placements

Jensen, Russell, from other denomination to Middlebury, N. Ind.
Pfeiffer, Carol, from seminary to English River, N. Plains

Ordinations

Bitner, Robert L., Aug. 19, Union City, S. Ohio
Bosserman, Sandra Leach, July 26, Peace Valley, Mo./Ark.
Dorsey, Janice Welch, Sept. 13, Downsville, Mid-Atl.
Fogle, Lerry, Sept. 13, Frederick, Mid-Atl.
Gault, Mary Frances, Aug. 21, Battle Creek, Mich.
Hufford, Lisa, Aug. 2, Nappanee, N. In.
Kelly, John Stuart, June 21, Hollins Road, Virlina (received)
Ketterman, Richard E., June 7, Glendale, Mid. Pa.
Knepper, Nancy Fike, May 17, New Covenant, Atl. S.E.
Kohler, Paul, Sept. 13, Champaign, Ill./Wis.
Krähenbühl, Lee, Aug. 21, Skyridge, Mich.
Spire, Steven Ronald, May 17, French Broad, S.E.
Wine, Ronald K., May 17, French Broad, S.E.
Woodin, Ataloa, May 3, Fresno, Pac. S.W.

Licensed

Blake, Brian John, Aug. 5, Hanover, S. Pa.

Bradley, Timothy Talbott, Sept. 13, Friendship, Mid-Atl.

Burk, Kelly J., Sept. 13, Westminster, Mid-Atl.

Criswell, Scott W., Sept. 6, Maitland, Mid. Pa.

Ewing, John, Sept. 13, Cherry Grove, Ill./Wis.

Held, Cheryl Snyder, Sept. 13, Westminster, Mid-Atl.

Laszakovits, Gregory E., Aug 3, Phoenix, Pac. S.W.

Sievers, Michael Robert, Sept. 21, Brookville, S. Ohio

Staubs, Michael, May 17, Fellowship, Mid-Atl.

Deaths

Albin, Rev. Charles A., 97, Marshalltown, Iowa, Oct. 23, 1997

Alford, Catherine Jannie, 84, Waynesboro, Va., Sept. 28, 1997

Arnold, Esther E., 76, Ashland, Ohio, Aug. 20, 1997

Baile, Salome Mohler, 90, Warrensburg, Mo., Sept. 25, 1997

Baugh, Retha, 71, Broadway, Va., Sept. 18, 1997

Beard, Dan, Sr., 88, Lansing, Mich., Sept. 29, 1997

Bigler, Earl, 81, Lancaster, Pa., April 27, 1997

Bollinger, Alvin, 95, Lititz, Pa., Sept. 16

Bowers, Elizabeth, 67, Knoxville, Md., March 4, 1997

Bratton, Barry, 53, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Oct. 8, 1997

Cassel, Margaret, 84, Lititz, Pa., July 12, 1997

Clay, Donald O., 82, Floyd, Va., Oct. 5, 1997

Crownover, Florence, 85, Shelocta, Pa., July 26, 1997

Crull, Bob, 71, Angola, Ind., Sept. 5, 1997

Davis, Mildred, 85, Hagerstown, Md., March 23, 1997

Dehmey, Ruth, Lititz, Pa., Sept. 26, 1997

Derree, Violet, 83, Red Lion, Pa., Oct. 21, 1997

Dove, Alton "Dick" Delano, 64, Timberville, Va., Oct. 22, 1997

Dowden, Harold A., 77, Circleville, Ohio, Sept. 2, 1997

Eavers, Ruby G., 84, Stuarts Draft, Va., Oct. 13, 1997

Ebert, Mildred, 78, New Creek, W.VA., Sept. 22, 1997

English, Wallace, 84, Sheldon, Iowa, April 14, 1997

Evans, Harold V., 81, Sheldon, Iowa, Aug. 24, 1997

Foltz, Nancy, 70, Bridgewater, Va., Nov. 2, 1997

Frantz, Trilba, 88, Warsaw, Ind., Aug. 27, 1997

Frye, Clayton V., Norfolk, Va., May 3, 1997

Fulmer, Irene, 75, Elkhart, Ind., Aug. 16, 1997

Getz, Ruth K. 91, Manheim, Pa., July 11, 1997

Godfrey, Sterling L., 96, York Pa., Sept. 25, 1997

Good, Herman, Lancaster, Pa., July 29, 1997

Good, John F., Sr., 88, Grottoes, Va., Oct. 28, 1997

Goodman, Emmitt, Otway, Ohio, Oct. 6, 1997

Griffith, Herman David, 77, Singers Glen, Va., Oct. 21, 1997

Grumbling, Richard A., 89, Shippensburg, Pa., Aug. 20, 1997

Harbold, Lloyd E., 77, Cross Keys Brethren Home, Nov. 4, 1997

Hargett, Betty, 67, Knoxville, Md., Aug. 2, 1997

Hawk, Mrs. Donneth, 80, Akron, Ohio, Oct. 4, 1997

Hawkins, Louise Sanger, Carrollton, Mo., July 24, 1997

Helmick, Erma Lee Crider, 66, Baker, W. Va., Oct. 27, 1997

Herr, Roy, Lebanon, Pa., Sept. 4, 1997

Hoffer, Russell, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 23, 1997

Hoover, Russell, 86, Sebring, Fla. Sept. 23, 1997

Hoover, Tracie H., 70, Mt. Bethel, Va., Sept. 17, 1997

Howdyshell, Georgia P., 84, Mt. Solon, Va., Oct. 25, 1997

Huffman, Lucy Virginia, 76, Mt. Zion Church of the Brethren, Oct. 23, 1997

Hutzell, Virginia, 68, Boonsboro, Md., July 22, 1997

Ingle, Walter F., 96, La Verne, Calif., Sept. 27, 1997

Johnson, Truman E., 89, Scherr, W.VA., June 14, 1997

Keister, Harry A., 76, Timberville, Va., Sept. 18, 1997

Kessner, Mernie S., 79, Franklin, W. Va., Oct. 6, 1997

Kimble, Vauda, 79, New Creek, W.Va., Nov. 11, 1996

Kimmel, Helen, 89, Sheldon, Iowa, May 2, 1997

Knight, Clyde Henry, 92, Charlottesville, Va., Oct. 13, 1997

Kreiser, Levi R., 79, York, Pa. Nov. 2, 1997

Long, Robert, 59, Pleasant View, Mid-Atl., May 9, 1997

Longenecker, Edith, 96, Lititz, Pa., Oct. 13, 1997

Manchester, Alice, 93, Covina, Calif., June 7, 1997

Marra, Leila, Accident, Md., March 19, 1997

Marshall, Sudie, 97, Danville, Va., Aug. 18, 1997

Mauck, Annece Mable McNabb, 71, Strasburg, Va., Oct. 2, 1997

McCauley, Malcolm Keith "Monk," 69, North Garden, Va., Sept. 23, 1997

McDowell, Argel, 82, Goshen, Ind., Oct. 1, 1997

McKimmey, Blanche "Penny," 58, Knoxville, Md., May 29, 1997

Michael, Richard Thomas, 62, Bridgewater, Va., Oct. 30, 1997

Miller, Elizabeth Rupp, 83, Fort Wayne, Ind., Sept. 3, 1997

Miller, Esther, 91, Sebring, Fla., Sept. 19, 1997

Miller, Lamont, Windber, Pa., April 22, 1997

Mitchell, Harold, 47, Harrisonburg, Va. Sept. 21, 1997

Morris, Goldie Miller, 79, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 24, 1997

Morris, Samuel "Lindy," 67, Dayton, Va., Oct. 4, 1997

Myer, Mazie, 108, Akron, Pa., Oct. 3, 1997

Nedrow, George T., 81, Latrobe, Pa., Sept. 30, 1997

Neff, Mary K., 72, Mount Jackson, Va., Oct. 10, 1997

Nofsinger, Clara Edris, 53, Strasburg, Va., Oct. 8, 1997

Noonkester, Stella Prather, 93, Danville, Va., Aug. 4, 1997

Norris, Velma, 82, Dayton, Ohio, April 7, 1997

Ott, Clara, 73, Windber, Pa., Jan. 16, 1997

Parlette, Ella, 96, Lima, Ohio, Sept. 28, 1997

Peachey, Linda, 95, Sebring, Fla. Oct. 7, 1997

Poole, Roy R., 84, Virden, Ill., Oct. 3, 1997

Pratt, Joseph G., 89, Santa Rosa, Calif., May 4, 1997

Reedy, Warren D. Sr., 60, Singers Glen, Va., Sept. 19, 1997

Reuter, Phillip, 71, Tipp City, Ohio, Sept. 30, 1997

Reynolds, Lawrence, 32, Farmington, Del., Nov. 2, 1997

Roberts, Virginia, 72, Ashland, Ohio, Aug. 26, 1997

Sacra, Homer A., Sr., 88, McGaheysville, Va., Oct. 17, 1997

Schafer, Ralph, Onekama, Mich., 77, Sept. 13, 1997

Schlosnagle, Marie, 71, Accident, Md., March 25, 1997

Shaver, Mildred M., 83, Fort Seybert, W. Va., Oct. 3, 1997

Sheets, Rev. Antoinette "Nettie," 84, Wooster, Ohio, Sept. 17, 1997

Shifflett, Ellen Virginia, 73, Timberville, Va., Sept. 19, 1997

Show, Doris, 77, Uniontown, Pa., June 20, 1997

Showalter, Emily, 16, Millersburg, Ind., Aug. 4, 1997

Shull, Evaleen E., 77, Sangerville, Va., Oct. 5, 1997

Shull, Fern, 99, Lawrence, Kan., Aug. 9, 1997

Siever, Harlen, 65, Mount Jackson, Va., July 15, 1997

Smith, Esther, 68, Palmyra, Pa., July 1, 1997

Smith, Lawrence, 96, New Lebanon, Ohio, June 8, 1997

Smith, Michael, 17, Greentown, Ind., May 2, 1997

Snoeberger, Robert, 82, Woodbury, Pa., Sept. 11, 1997

Spangler, Esther, 95, Bridgewater, Va., July 27, 1997

Stambaugh, Leona M., 78, Camp Hill, Pa., Sept. 11, 1997

Staub, Ruth Greer, 87, Dover, Pa., Aug. 16, 1997

Sterner, Goldie I., 93, Cross Keys Brethren Home, Sept. 2, 1997

Stocksdale, Ethel, Greenville, Ohio, June 27, 1997

Swemly, Carrie A., 89, Cross Keys Brethren Home, Oct. 1, 1997

Temple, Jack, Onekama, Mich., 76, Aug. 29, 1997

Thompson, Grace, 96, Frederick, Md., April 30, 1997

Tribby, James, 86, McGaheysville, Va., June 21, 1997

Tritapoe, Robert M., 67, Knoxville, Md., Feb. 21, 1997

Turner, Brenda Sue, 39, Moorefield, W. Va., Oct. 8, 1997

Turner, Floda Alice, 82, Onego, W. Va., Sept. 13, 1997

Turner, Ted, 91, Seneca Rocks, W. Va., Sept. 19, 1997

Utz, J. Norman, 94, Littlestown, Pa., Sept. 15, 1997

Wahl, Marguerite, 80, New Port Richey, Fla., June 5, 1997

Wallace, Catherine, 85, Cross Keys, Pa., Aug. 6, 1997

Wargo, Gladys, 83, Windber, Pa., Sept. 14, 1997

Wean, Earl Sr., 79, Pleasant View, Mid-Atl., April 17, 1997

Weaver, Rev. John L., 82, Palmyra, Pa., Aug. 30, 1997

Weaver, Urban, 80, Greenville, Ohio, May 6, 1997

Webb, Henry Allen, Dayton, Ohio, Sept. 26, 1997

Webb, Noelle Z. Neff, 54, Mount Crawford, Va., Oct. 23, 1997

West, Paul, 78, Unionville, Iowa, April 17, 1997

Whetzel, Arlie, 85, Petersburg, W. Va., July 31, 1997

Whetzel, Doris, 67, Mount Solon, Va., July 19, 1997

Whetzel, Ormand, 73, Timberville, Va., July 2, 1997

Whipple, Lee, 83, Yoncalla, Ore., Oct. 7, 1997

Whisler, Clarence E., 97, Virden, Ill., 1997

White, Gilbert H., 95, Melcroft, Pa., Oct. 21, 1997

Whitmore, Frank, 72, Bridgewater, Va., July 19, 1997

Wilkins, Gary, 44, Moorefield, W. Va., Oct. 28, 1997

Wilkins, Lory A., 73, Mathias, W. Va., Sept. 15, 1997

Williamson, Burnell, 83, Columbus, Ind., July 22, 1997

Wills, Glen, 83, Roanoke, Va., Feb. 16, 1997

Wimer, Audrey, 75, Franklin, W. Va., June 11, 1997

Wine, Dennis, 80, Timberville, Va., Sept. 24, 1997

Wine, Paul "Sammy" Allen, 87, Hinton, Va., Oct. 26, 1997

Witt, Frank, 75, Champaign, Ill., July 24, 1997

Witter, Harry M., 83, Chambersburg, Md., Nov. 2, 1997

Wolf, Wilma, 95, Pottstown, Pa., June 26, 1997

Woodson, Carl, 73, Roanoke, Va., Feb. 18, 1997

Yankey, Viola F., 75, New Market, Va., Oct. 8, 1997

Young, Lerty, 82, McGaheysville, Va., June 24, 1997

Editorial

On costs and counting well

Those who attended Annual Conference last summer heard over and over the exhortation to "Count Well the Cost" of this and that. Count well the cost of community. Count well the cost of simplicity and service and peace. Count well the cost of discipleship. But nobody ever explained what it means to count well, as opposed to counting poorly. And then there was little discussion of what to do after the cost gets counted. How our church answers these two questions will decide whether we are fearful bean counters or faithful disciples.

The Annual Conference theme seemed apt because the church has been big into cost-cutting these days. Whenever new cuts were announced those making the cuts said woefully, "We had no other choice," and the rest of us nodded in agreement. Business is business. It takes courage to make the tough calls, we say. Even though we quibble over the details, most of us see cost-cutting as a necessary evil, and the more necessary, the less evil. In an atmosphere of limited resources like our church is experiencing, there becomes only one thing to do after costs are counted: Cut them.

That's not exactly what Jesus taught in Luke 4. "Which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it?" He doesn't say what is the right thing for the tower-builder to do if there isn't enough money. One alternative would be to build a shorter tower. But Jesus at least leaves open the other alternative, which is to go out and raise more money. "Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand?" Here, Jesus does suggest one answer to the dilemma. "If he cannot," then he ought to ask for terms of peace. But Jesus also left open another alternative, which was to fight even though outnumbered. Jesus might have been hoping his listeners would recall Gideon. Remember? Gideon had the Lord.

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When we count the costs, we need not automatically change our plans to build a smaller tower, but instead go out and raise more revenue. The best thing to do with unfunded mandates is to fund them.

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Which is what it means to count well. Usually there are factors beyond the obvious to be taken into consideration. Businesspeople know that cutting here may affect revenues there. Likewise the church, if we cut costs without carefully considering whether it is muscle or fat being cut, isn't counting well. Muscle pays its own way.

For more on counting costs, Brethren turn to Alexander Mack, Sr., who in his hymn had more to say to the tower-builder in Luke. "Are you resolved, though all seem lost, to risk your reputation, your self, your wealth, for Christ the Lord as you now give your solemn word?" The implication clearly is to not just count the costs but pay them. Counting costs well is not so much about cutting costs as it is about commitment. Many of us are happy to sing "to the death we'll follow thee" then complain about Annual Conference approving "unfunded mandates." On the surface it makes sense to argue that if Annual Conference is going to ask the General Board to do something, it ought to identify a source of money to go along with it. But only if you forget all the unfunded mandates in the New Testament. "Go ye into all the world. . . ." "Heal the sick." "Deliver the captives." "Preach good news to the poor."

Do we say, "Jesus, where's the money?" Or do we say, "Here's our church, Lord. Send the Brethren."

There has been, of course, a time to cut costs. But now it's time, it seems, for the church to move beyond that. It's time to raise the vision. When we count the costs, we need not automatically change our plans to build a smaller tower, but instead go out and raise more revenue. The best thing to do with unfunded mandates is to fund them. And then ask for the next challenge. It may be another unfunded mandate, like: "Stir us to build new worlds in thy name." We should start building, no matter what it costs.—FLETCHER FARRAR

The Brethren Homes of the Atlantic Northeast District.
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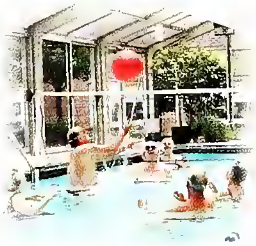

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CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

212th Annual Conference

Orlando, Florida

June 30 - July 5, 1998

VOLUNTEER HELPERS

I am volunteering my help with Conference tasks, I have marked below. I have numbered them in order of preference. I plan to arrive at Conference on _______________

_______ Brethren Press Exhibit
_______ Registration (computer experience required)
_______ Usher (business and general sessions)
_______ Teller
_______ Information/Mail desk
_______ Nurse
_______ Ticket sales
_______ SERRV Exhibit

Please circle approximate age	16 - 22	22 - 30	30 - 40
	40 - 50	50 - 60	60 +

Name _______________
St./RFD _______________
City _______________ State _______ Zip _______
Telephone No. _______________

Additional volunteers may indicate on a separate sheet their interest in serving.

PROGRAM BOOKLET

(Available in May)

Please send the following:

_______Copies at $8.00 each of the 1998 Annual Conference Booklet (regular binding)

_______Copies at $11.50 each of the 1998 Annual Conference Booklet (spiral binding)

_______Copies at $2.00 each of the 1998 Annual Conference Information Packet

Name _______________
St./RFD _______________
City _______________ State _______ Zip _______
Amount remitted $ _______________

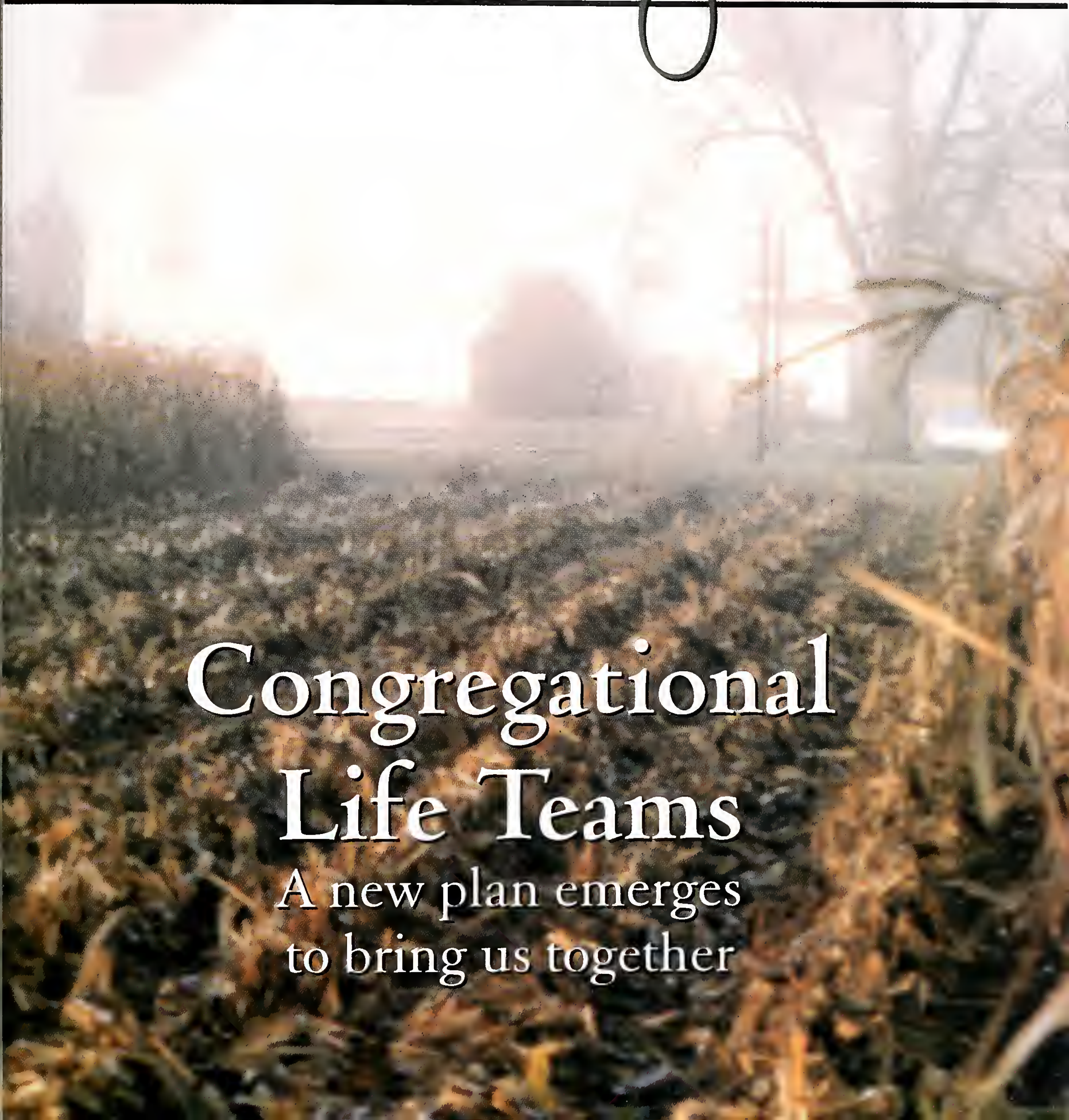
(Delegates sending the delegate authorization form and registration fee will automatically receive one program booklet without further cost.)

Information about Conference programs and reservation forms may be obtained by contacting your pastor or:

Annual Conference Office
1451 Dundee Avenue
Elgin, Illinois 60120

Church of the Brethren March 1998

Messenger



Congregational Life Teams

A new plan emerges to bring us together

ABIN MAMAKI: A THING OF WONDER

A young church and a church of the young is Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, one of sub-Sahara Africa's fast growing denominations. On March 17 EYN will mark the 75th anniversary of its founding.

EYN's compelling faith, courageous leadership, spirited choirs, and solid advances in education, Bible training, health, agriculture, and evangelism are best described by a Hausa phrase, *abin mamaki*, which means "a new surprising thing arises." Rejoice with our sisters and brothers in EYN, God's wondrous new thing in Nigeria. **CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN GENERAL BOARD**

Messenger

Vol. 147, No. 2 March 1998

Editor: Fletcher Farrar
News: Nevin Dulabaum
Subscriptions: Vicki Roche
Publisher: Wendy McFadden
Designer: Paul Stocksdale

On the cover: As dawn breaks on the Ivester Church of the Brethren, Grundy Center, Iowa, a new program emerges to offer new light to congregations.

Glenn Mitchell

18
WELCOME
VOLUNTEERS • FAMILY • FRIENDS • VISITORS
THE BUTLER CHAPEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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JANUARY 9th 10th 11th 1998 - HIGHWAY 178 (NORTH ROAD) ORANGEBURG SC 29115
REV: PATRICK B. MELLERSON & THE CHURCH FAMILY

Nevin Dulabaum

Features

10 At your service!
Congregational Life Teams, the latest program initiative from the General Board, are in place and ready to assist congregations. A dozen new staff members are spread across the country ready to help with teaching, resourcing, and networking "so that the body of Christ may be built up."

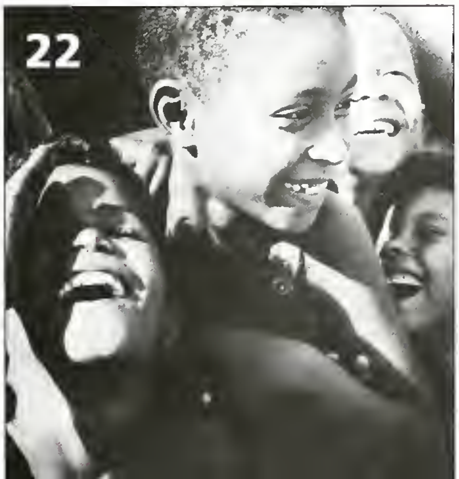
14 No creed but the Bible
Do you know why Brethren reject creeds? Frank Ramirez explains that the way we arrive at our faith is as important as the statement of faith itself. Brethren get there by studying the Bible together.

17 Tracing footprints in the soil
Joseph M. Mason, the interim executive director of the General Board relates the dream he had before beginning his service in that position. The vision that gave him hope and confidence can inspire us all.

18 Out from the ashes comes a dream fulfilled
Some 200 Brethren volunteers turned hate to Christian love when they helped to rebuild the arson-destroyed Butler Chapel A.M.E. church in Orangeburg, S.C. In January the volunteers returned for an emotional and praise-filled dedication celebration.

22 What makes a Great Hour?
One Great Hour of Sharing, the global mission appeal which takes place on March 22, is a major ecumenical event. Here is the background and history of the cooperative effort to put love into action.

24 Remembering Bethany's Oak Brook campus
Bethany Theological Seminary has already made its successful transition to its new campus at Richmond, Ind., but some sadness lingers at the old campus, now being razed for new development. Two writers who knew the old campus well reminisce here.



Phil Grout

Departments

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From the Publisher

I have always loved words. I can still remember the first time, at age four, that I read a word all by myself. There was no stopping after that. I had a half-read book in every room of the house and ruined my eyes reading at night with a flashlight.

Later on my mother, a former English teacher, taught me the power of editing one's writing. I began my journalism career as a paper carrier delivering the now-defunct *Washington Star.* In high school and college I churned out pages of poetry.

I no longer spend any of my time writing poetry or other creative writing, though I sometimes regret that. Nowadays most of the words I'm responsible for are in memos, reports, letters, and contractual agreements.

Though memos are hardly glamorous, they're part of a larger fabric of communication within the church that includes both the noticeable and the ordinary. Whatever the medium, I always hope that my words make the complex more understandable, strengthen connections between people, minimize barriers, enhance discipleship, and ultimately build up the body of Christ.

A church publishing house is a unique blend of ministry (words) and business (numbers). While I come from the word side, I have a new appreciation for numbers. It is only through skillful management of the numbers that we can continue to publish the words.

But we live in tension with some of the numbers. For example, the number of Brethren is almost too small to support a publishing house. It is difficult to break even on a book, curriculum, magazine, or church supply that is produced solely for Brethren. But we continue to do some of that, because we're committed to supplying materials that foster Brethren identity and belief.

To help pay for those materials, we try to be ever more creative in reaching markets beyond ourselves. For years we've worked in cooperation with many other denominations to produce curriculum, for example. And now, we're gratified that two curricula we're producing with the General Conference Mennonites—designed to meet our own Brethren and Mennonite needs—are being embraced by people in other denominations. We have a message that reaches beyond the Brethren.

Of course some things have to be done by ourselves. We're creating our own heritage and membership curricula, launching our own Web page, and continuing to publish our own Church of the Brethren magazine.

Many years ago that magazine, a unifying force in a fragmented church, was the seed that eventually produced a publishing house. A century later, Brethren Press still seeks to be a place where Brethren meet to grow in the faith and discern God's movement among us. May our words always do that for you.

Wendy McFadden

How to reach us

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Evangel '97 ignites participants

Bring on the fire! For over 500 young adults, the Christmas break wasn't a time to sleep off a month of overeating in front of a crackling fire. It was, rather, a time to be filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit as they attended Evangel '97, an international young adult conference on mission and evangelism. From December 28 to January 1, these men and women gathered in Atlanta, Ga., for a life-changing week of worship, teaching, and outreach. The event was hosted by Global Disciples, a growing network of Anabaptist-related discipleship and mission training ministries. The conference featured dynamic speakers, upbeat worship times, and forays into the city, where conference-goers put into practice on the streets what they heard daily in the lecture hall.—Ann and Jon Metzler

Global Disciples

The power of prayer. *Elizabeth Dich, right, in prayer with another participant at Evangel '97*

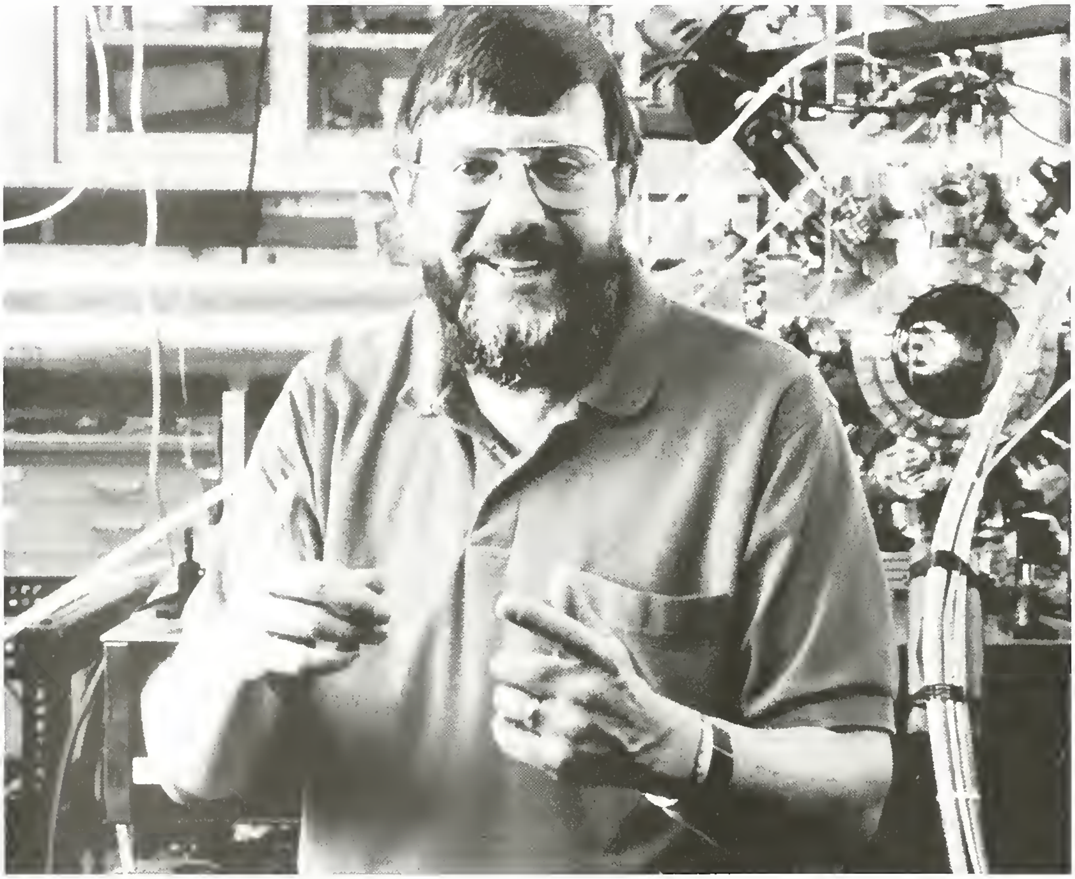
Remembered

Arthur Leon Rummel died June 7, 1997, in Escondido, Calif., at the age of 99. He had been a pastor in the Church of the Brethren for over 70 years.

- **The Rev. Charles Albin** of Marshalltown, Iowa, died Oct. 23 at the age of 97. He was a member of the Iowa River Church of the Brethren in Marshalltown, and was honored in 1996 for serving as an ordained pastor of 75 years. He was pastor of the Ivester Church of the Brethren from 1952 until 1966.
- **John Howard Yoder**, Mennonite theologian, died December 30 at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Ind., at the age of 70. The *New York Times* said in its obituary: "Mr. Yoder stressed that the work of Jesus was not a new set of ideals or principles for reforming or even revolutionizing society, but the establishment of a new community, a people that embodied forgiveness, sharing and self-sacrificing love in its rituals and discipline. In that sense, the visible church for him was not the bearer of Christ's message; it was itself to be the message." His books and articles included *The Politics of Jesus* (1972), *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution* (1983), and *For the Nations* (1997).

Huffman Health Center completed

On Nov. 13, 1997, the Bridgewater Retirement Community celebrated the completion of a major remodeling of the nursing facility of Bridgewater Home with an open house and renaming of the nursing facility to Huffman Health Center. A ceremony held in Lantz Chapel honored Dr. Jacob S. Huffman, "father of Bridgewater Home," for the vision and planning that led to the beginning of what is now Bridgewater Retirement Community. Dr. Harold Huffman and Dr. Rufus Huffman, sons of Dr. Jacob Huffman, were present to receive memorial awards in honor of their father and his contribution to Bridgewater Home. Huffman Health Center consists of three floors and approximately 150 nursing beds.



Robert Rathe

William Daniel Phillips, *winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics, invited his Juniata College physics professor to join him at the award ceremonies in Stockholm in December.*

Juniata grad wins Nobel Prize

William Daniel Phillips, a 1970 graduate of Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa., on Dec. 10 was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics with two other researchers for their work in developing methods to cool and trap atoms with laser light. Dr. Phillips still considers veteran 39-year Juniata professor, Dr. Wilfred Norris, as one of his biggest influences in the field of physics.

Auction for expansion in Dupont, Ohio

The Dupont congregation in Ohio began a $351,000 addition in March 1996 which included a gymnasium, classrooms, and restrooms.

Most of the indebtedness has already been erased, thanks to many projects, including an all-church auction and barbecue last September that raised $10,651. Among the auctioned items were a quilt, two motorcycles, and a car.

Diabetes Educator of the Year

Sherry Trunnel, a member of the Prairie City Church of the Brethren, Iowa, was named the 1997 Diabetes Educator of the Year by the American Association of Diabetes Educators. Trunnel works in the Children's Health Center at Blank Children's Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa. The award includes $1,000, a commemorative plaque, and an $8,000 travel grant to fund speaking engagements across the country over the next year.—Tim Peter

A town called Tunker

The *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette* on Nov. 30 featured the town of Tunker, Ind., pop. 75, and its Sugar Creek Church of the Brethren, built in 1886. The town, south of Fort Wayne, was originally called Dunkard, the article explained, because Dunkards, "a religious sect from Germany," settled in the area. Later the name was changed to Tunker, "the English name for Dunkard."

Tons of turkey

For the third year in a row, the Chiques Church of the Brethren, Manheim, Pa., gave away holiday dinners for Thanksgiving and Christmas, distributing them to area families near and far. Altogether the church gave away 850 meals using 11,073 pounds of turkey, 280 cases of canned goods, 850 pies, and about that many gospel tracts. The project was funded through special offerings that totaled $12,982.—Don Fitzkee

Ramsey Endowment for urban ministry

The children of Duane H. and Jane E. Ramsey have established an endowment fund in honor of the 45 years their parents served the Washington City Church of the Brethren before Duane's recent retirement as pastor there. Income from the endowment will be used to enhance projects related to ministry in the urban setting, particularly for scholarships to students working in a city ministry project. Other Capitol Hill community groups and churches may benefit as well. The family has received more than $13,000 in pledges toward the endowed fund. Contributions may be sent to Ramsey Endowment, c/o Washington City Church of the Brethren, 337 N. Carolina Ave. SE, Washington, DC, 20003.

J. Herman Royer *with Luke Bucker, minister/moderator of the Heidelberg congregation.*

Surprise recognition for 50 years of service

The Heidelberg Church of the Brethren in Myerstown, Pa., surprised J. Herman Royer last October with a special recognition of his 50 years of faithful service as a deacon of the congregation. He has also served the church as Sunday school superintendent, teacher, church clerk, delegate to Annual Conference, youth director (with his wife Grace, now deceased), carpenter, painter, and paper hanger.—Dorothy Heisey

Directing the Multicultural Choir *at Annual Conference was one of the many ways Leonardo Wilborn has shared his gift of music.*

Music minister on the move

A well-known Brethren musician, Leonardo V. Wilborn, was licensed to the ministry last July at the Imperial Heights Church of the Brethren in Los Angeles, Calif. Wilborn has for the past eight years been director of music at Imperial Heights church and in 1996 directed the Multicultural Choir at Annual Conference. He is the keyboard player and music director for Gilbert Romero's Christian rock group, "The Bittersweet Gospel Band." Currently he is enrolled at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif. He received both the Fuller Seminary African-American Ministry Grant and the Church of the Brethren William A. Hayes Scholarship.

Celebrates centennial

A. Ruth Whitacre, a resident of Goodwill Mennonite Home in Grantsville, Md., celebrated her 100th birthday Dec. 10. She is an ordained minister, the first ordained female in the District of First West Virginia, Church of the Brethren. Her husband, Jesse, who died in 1995, was a pastor who served 12 different congregations. Her two sons are pastors: Charles J. Whitacre, retired, of Denver, Colo., and Daniel J. Whitacre of Meyersdale, Pa., pastor of the Salisbury Church of the Brethren and the Maple Glen Church of the Brethren in Western Pennsylvania.

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," Messenger, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

News

Two Brethren churches burn in January, one because of arson

What next? is what two Church of the Brethren congregations were asking in January in the aftermath of fires that destroyed both of their churches.

The Pike Run Church of the Brethren, located six miles west of Somerset, Pa., was destroyed Jan. 27 in a blaze that was responded to by eight fire companies. The fire was noticed by a church member who drove by the building just past midnight. After driving home to call 911, he returned and spotted footprints leading up to a broken window. The local fire marshal; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms subsequently ruled the fire to be an act of arson. Two other nearby churches were also destroyed during the preceding week in fires blamed on arson.

Michael P. Brown

Battling the blaze. *Two Old Order Brethren who live near the Manchester Church of the Brethren watch as firefighters struggle to save the building.*

Not much remains of Pike Run. The roof and some of the walls collapsed, taking out the first floor as they crashed into the basement. The brick building, constructed in 1914, was fully insured, said pastor Barry Conn.

After one preliminary meeting on Jan. 29, the congregation was scheduled to meet in mid-February to discuss its short- and long-term plans.

Also coping without its home for the foreseeable future is the Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind., which lost its building Jan. 7 in a blaze traced to a faulty water heater in the church's dishwasher.

The Manchester church was fully insured by Mutual Aid Association.

This fire was first reported at 2:06 a.m. by a Manchester police officer on routine patrol. Ten area fire departments responded to the call. However, according to the Manchester *News-Journal*, it took more than 30 minutes for the nearest aerial fire truck—20 miles away in Wabash—to arrive on the scene. Firefighters were also hindered in dousing the blaze because the church's natural gas cutoff was located inside the building.

The intensity of the fire was evident from the fact that it rained in North Manchester Wednesday evening and Thursday morning, and yet firefighters were called back to the scene Thursday morning to extinguish the smoldering embers located in a heap of what had been the sanctuary.

"It's a real overwhelming experience, a devastating experience," said Susan Boyer, pastor.

About 150 church members gathered in the pouring rain later that night for a short time of worship and prayer. Worship that next Sunday was held at the local high school. The following week the congregation began meeting at Manchester College, which it will continue to do indefinitely.

While church members are devastated about losing their house of worship, they are aware that the church is the people, said Boyer, who added the congregation is blessed that no one was hurt.

"We really would appreciate people's prayers for us as we seek to hear God's vision for us and the church," she said the day of the fire.

Additional stories and photos of these fires are available at the denomination's official web site at http://www.brethren.org.

News items are intended to inform. They do not necessarily represent the opinions of Messenger *or the General Board, and should not be considered to be an endorsement or advertisement.*

The business and ballot for Orlando '98 are announced

The tentative business agenda and the ballot for this summer's Annual Conference, June 30—July 5 in Orlando, were released in January.

Five new and four unfinished business items will be considered by Annual Conference delegates.

The Annual Conference Standing Committee will discuss the new business items during its meetings, which precede Conference. The 44 Standing Committee members, representing the denomination's 23 districts and Annual Conference office, will then forward these items on to Conference delegates with recommendations that the items be accepted, returned, or rejected.

Standing Committee members will also vote on this year's Annual Conference ballot. Only half of the candidates included on the ballot will be forwarded to Annual Conference delegates; this election will determine those candidates.

Orange County Convention Center
Nevin Dulabaum

Pack your walking shoes. *How big is the Orange County Convention Center, site of this year's Church of the Brethren Annual Conference? In the 10 years since the annual meeting was last held here, the building has been expanded to become the largest contiguous convention center in the country, second overall in total size to Chicago's three-building McCormick Place.*

New business

- Congregational structure. This query, passed by Standing Committee in 1996, was deferred until after the General Board's redesign.
- Fetal tissue use. The Human Genetic Engineering portion of a previous query received final disposition in 1997. The Fetal Tissue Use statement was rejected and thus becomes a new business item for 1998.
- Caring for the poor. A query from Harrisburg (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren.
- Revision to the Brethren Benefit Trust Articles of Organization.
- Changes to the Brethren Benefit Trust Retired Church Workers Fund. This and the previous item come from BBT's board of directors.

Unfinished business

- World Mission Philosophy and Global Church Mission Structure report. The final document of a committee formed at the direction of the 1996 Standing Committee.
- The New Testament as Our Rule of Faith and Practice report. This query was accepted by Standing Committee in 1997. It appointed a group to draft this report.
- Polity for Free Ministry report. This query was accepted by the 1997 Standing Committee. A committee was formed to draft this report.
- Unfunded Mandates report. This query was accepted by the General Board in 1996 and by Standing Committee in 1997.

Reports

- Report from the Committee on Interchurch Relations on a potential relationship with the National Association of Evangelicals.
- Report from the InterAgency Forum (which includes representatives from the Annual Conference office and the three organizations that report directly to the Annual Conference).
- Report from the Standing Committee subcommittee that is researching the role of Standing Committee in the Church of the Brethren.

Ballot

- Moderator-elect: Joan George Deeter, J.D. Glick, Harold Moyer, Emily Metzger Mumma.
- General Board (at-large): Kim Yaussy Albright, Andy Loomis, Janet Over Sell, Jan Thompson.
- General Board (Atlantic Southeast District): Merle Crouse, Ron McInnis, Mary Mason Peckover, Irma Zayas.
- General Board (Missouri/Arkansas District): Don Brooks, Dale Grosbach, Elizabeth Baile Irle, Cynthia Loper Sanders.
- General Board (Southern Pennsylvania District): Warren Eshbach, John Henry, Roger Miller, Sara Swartz.
- Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee: Janet Frankhouser Brounce, Paul Brubaker, Wendi Hutchinson, Paul Roth.
- Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee: Wanda Button, Eunice Erb Culp, Joseph Hinish, James King Jr.
- Committee on Interchurch Relations: Jim Beckwith, Tim McElwee, Dorotha Fry Mason, Belita Mitchell.
- Brethren Benefit Trust: Janice Bratton, Cheryl Ottemoeller Ingold, Gary Osborne, Norma Jeanne Hochstetler Shaub.
- Elector, Bethany Theological Seminary (for the laity): Karen Orpurt Crim, James McKinney, David Wysong, Peggy Mangus Yoder (incumbent).
- Elector, Bethany Theological Seminary (for the ministry): Susan Stern Boyer, Judith Gibble Kipp, Karen Peterson Miller, Michael Titus.

Additional Annual Conference information is available on the denomination's official web site at http://www.brethren.org/ac/index.htm

Staff changes are announced by three organizations

Carol Bowman of Wenatchee, Wash., has been appointed half-time Congregational Life Team staff for Area 5. A legal assistant when hired, Bowman previously served as support staff for the Oregon/Washington District.

Guillermo Encarnación has resigned as interim Dominican Republic representative, effective March 27. He has held this position since June 1994. He will continue pastoring Alpha and Omega Church of the Brethren, Lancaster, Pa.

Larry Glick, who has served as associate executive of Shenandoah District for 15 years, has resigned effective March 31. He plans to spend more time with his family.

Joan Hershey has begun serving as quarter-time coordinator of New Life Ministries, successor to the General Board's Andrew Center; she had been the center's lead congregational adviser. She has leadership experience in many denominational settings.

Linda McCauliff of Johnstown, Pa., has begun serving as half-time Area 1 Congregational Life Team member. She continues serving Western Pennsylvania District as half-time associate executive.

Howard Miller of Westminster, Md., retired Dec. 31 from the General Board staff. He had served as a financial counselor since January 1993.

Nada Sellers, pastor of Pasadena (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, has begun serving as half-time staff for the Area 5 Congregational Life Team. She has served as adviser for students at Fuller School of Theology, as an associate pastor, and as a chaplain.

Rebecca Slough, assistant professor of Ministry Studies and director of Congregational and Field Education at Bethany Theological Seminary, has resigned to join the faculty of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind.

Craig Smith, senior pastor of Eaton (Ohio) Church of the Brethren, has been called to serve as executive of Atlantic Northeast District by April 1. Smith has served the Eaton congregation since 1989.

Carol Yeazell of Valrico, Fla., has begun serving as half-time Area 3 Congregational Life Team member and as half-time executive of Atlantic Southeast District. She has served as interim pastor of Winter Park (Fla.) Church of the Brethren, and as executive of the United States/Mexico Chamber of Commerce—Gulf States Region.

Carol Bowman

Guillermo Encarnación

Larry Glick

Joan Hershey

Linda McCauliff

Howard Miller

Donald Myers

Nada Sellers

Rebecca Slough

Craig Smith

Carol Yeazell

Solid management and strong donor support result in a positive year for the General Board

The Church of the Brethren General Board's preliminary 1997 audit shows that it may close its books about $500,000 ahead of projections made in October.

With the Board's redesign, which reduced its budget by $2,000,000 from 1996 through 1997, finance staff were unable to precisely project end-of-the-year totals, as nearly one-third of the Board's employees were released during the year. Thus, projections were based on budgeted income and expense parameters. Though income came in close to budget, expenses were about $450,000 under budget.

"Expenses were contained through employee vacancies handled through heroic staff efforts during transition times, deferred maintenance and purchases, and other one-time savings," said Judy Keyser, treasurer. "These results are uplifting as we end a year of transition for the General Board."

Other factors included good response to an end-of-the-year mail campaign, solid investments, and strong individual donations.

In Brief

Children from across the Church of the Brethren are encouraged to send care packages to North Korean children in an initiative sponsored by the General Board's Brethren Witness office. "North Korean children are in need of the simple necessities of life," said Brethren Witness director David Radcliff. "This is a chance for our children to respond to this need."

According to Kim Joo, Korean-born consultant to Brethren relief efforts, North Korean children have "almost nothing" following two years of floods and drought, and a deteriorating economy.

Brethren children are being asked to enclose several of these items in ziplock bags—nail clippers, vitamins, gloves, adhesive bandages, toothbrushes, combs and brushes, underclothes, vaseline, lotion, soap, crayons and paper, and pens and pencils—and send them to the Brethren Witness office in Elgin, Ill. For more information, call Radcliff at 800 323-8039.

Is there a correlation between the world's environment and human health? If so, how should people of faith respond?

Answers to these questions are included in "Your Health and the Environment: A Christian Perspective," a new study/action guide for congregations produced by General Board staff Shantilal Bhagat.

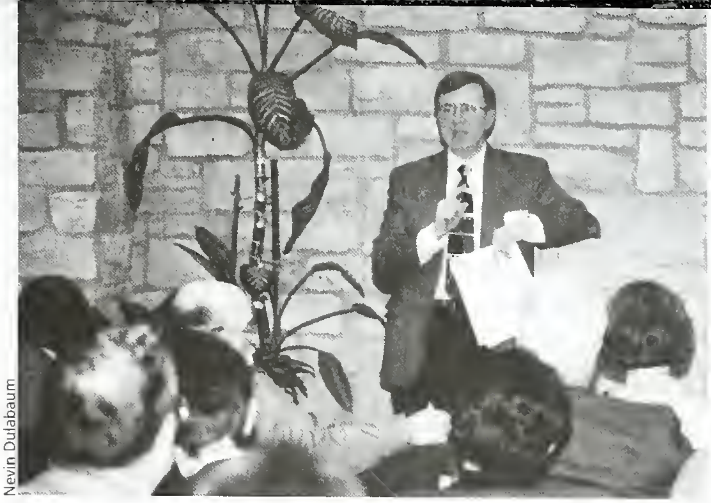
"This is a unique resource because there aren't any resources that we know of that comprehensively link human health, the environment, and the effect of toxics," Bhagat said.

Ten thousand copies of the 13-part study series are being distributed throughout the Church of the Brethren and other member communions of the National Council of Churches. Cost is $7.50; order from Brethren Press at 800 441-3712.

The General Board's centralized offices site committee met in early January at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. The committee, which has representatives from the General Board, the Annual Conference office, and Brethren Benefit Trust, used the time to do exactly what it did in November when it visited the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.: It toured the facility and met with the local development director of a government or civic organization.

The committee will present a progress report to the General Board this month. There is the expectation that the committee will include its final site recommendation in the report because that recommendation, originally scheduled to be made last March, was extended for one year. However, Joseph Mason, interim executive director of the General Board, would not elaborate if the committee's presentation would truly be a progress report or a final recommendation, underscoring the need for General Board members to receive the committee's report before details are publicized.

A consultation on ministerial training and leadership development was held Jan. 22–25 at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind. Nearly 50 Bethany faculty, district executives, General Board staff, and resource people gathered to discuss further development of ministry education and to focus on the current five-year denominational emphasis on ministry and leadership development.


Nevin Dulabaum

Focusing on ministry. *Rick Gardner, Bethany Theological Seminary's academic dean and associate professor of New Testament Studies, described the historic consultation on ministerial training and leadership development held at Bethany in January as a landmark meeting that brought together several partner agencies involved in ministry in the Church of the Brethren, giving them an opportunity to "articulate basic understandings of ministry that can serve as a common reference point for our respective programs."*

The two primary goals were to develop a core of shared understandings of the nature of ministry in the Church of the Brethren, and to do initial work on developing a partnership model for mentoring people who enter the ministry. Various presentations by participants discussed ministry from biblical, historical, and cultural perspectives. Presentation papers will be published in a future issue of *Brethren Life and Thought*.

The presentations served as valuable resources for small group dialog that led to the development of a working paper. This paper and further discussions on mentoring will be part of the agenda for the May meeting of the Ministry Advisory Council, which is composed of members of various ministry-related Brethren organizations. The Council will explore options for engaging districts and congregations in the conversation about ministry that the consultation set in motion.

Eight week-long Peace Camps for people of all ages will be offered this summer by On Earth Peace Assembly. These camps, a new ministry for the independent Church of the Brethren organization, will be held at the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md. Most of the leadership will be provided by Church of the Brethren members.

"Through these weekly Peace Camps, On Earth Peace Assembly is moving well beyond its traditional day-long and weekend-long peace education programming that only provides sufficient time to introduce issues related to faith-based peacemaking," said Tom Hurst, OEPA director. "Week-long camps that focus on particular peacemaking themes will provide sufficient time for an intense yet enjoyable experience." Hurst added that the Peace Camps are not intended to replace the traditional summer church camp experience; they are additional ways for people to spend one summer week.

Camp costs range between $210 and $250, which includes room, board, tuition, and materials. Contact OEPA at 410 635-8705 for more information or applications.

Nevin Dulabaum

The five area coordinators *of Congregational Life Teams met in Elgin in January with Glenn Timmons, director of Congregational Life Ministries. They are, front row: Jeff Glass, Julie Hostetter, Glenn Timmons. Back row: David Smalley, Jan Kensinger, and Beth Sollenberger Morphew.*

At your service!

Congregational Life Teams, the latest program initiative from the General Board, are in place and ready to assist congregations.

BY FLETCHER FARRAR

It is long-awaited, the newest program of the redesigned General Board staff, and it is launched. It is the Congregational Life Teams, currently 12 newly hired full-time and part-time staff members assigned to assist congregations and districts in doing the work of ministry. Amid the hope and uncertainty of a risky new venture, the CLTs are open for business.

"Exciting" is the word that kept coming up in a group discussion with the five CLT area coordinators at a January training session in Elgin. "It is exciting to be part of something new," says Julie Hostetter of Roanoke, Va., coordinator of Area 3, which includes southeastern districts. "This is the most proactive thing in the church right now."

"It's exciting to work at rebuilding connections and partnerships that have been lost," says Jan Kensinger of Hummelstown, Pa., coordinator of Area 1, the northeastern districts.

Of the "peacefully, simply, together" trio, Beth Sollenberger Morphew picks out the latter as her vision for the new venture. "We want to develop ties that put us in the 'together' category." Sollenberger Morphew is coordinator of Area 2, the midwestern districts.

The idea comes from Ephesians 4:12, in which various leaders in the church were named "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...." The Congregational Life Teams plan to do their work by responding to inquiries from churches or districts, performing consultations by request, and providing resources to congregations, according to Glenn Timmons, director of Congregational Life Ministries on the General Board staff. Team members expect to be offering workshops on a variety of subjects, providing leadership development and continuing education experiences.

While each team member brings different talents and gifts, all are expected to have some knowledge of six core subjects of importance to congregations: worship, spiritual development, stewardship education, evangelism, small member churches, and urban and ethnic ministries. On all these subjects, if the Congregational Life Team can't provide the needed service directly, then it will try to find the kind of expertise that will be of help. And if a person assigned to one geographical area has expertise needed in another, there is nothing to prevent that CLT member from traveling across area boundaries.

Timmons emphasizes that the first step for CLTs—before seminars, resources, or consultations—is building relationships within the wider church. This involves three types, he says: building relationships with God, building relationships with congregations and districts, and building relationships with the ministry areas of the General Board program. "Relationship is the vehicle for ministry and mission," Timmons says.

Realizing that it is a new concept for the General Board to have staff assigned to relate to congregations, the Congregational Life Team members want to be careful to go only where they're invited and welcome. Yet they're eager to solicit those invitations. "Early on we'll be in conversation with pastors," Timmons says. District executives, seen as key to the program's success, are also being carefully consulted. Planners hope that by increasing the resources available to congregations, CLTs will be viewed as a welcome companion to district ministries. "We will need to sell ourselves," Timmons says. He says Congregational Life Teams will be interpreting the General Board's mission and programs to congregations which may not be familiar with all the ministry areas in the redesigned structure.

The **CLTs hope congregations** will ask for help. "A healthy congregation will have a clear sense of mission, purpose, and focus," Timmons says. "We can help them find the resources and gifts to be in mission." Timmons knows that not all congregations and districts will make use of the Congregational Life Teams. "Some congregations have plenty of confidence and plenty of resources, and may not use this service," he says. "Others may have low self-esteem and lack of clarity about their mission. Or they may disagree with what they perceive as the theology of the General Board. They may not ask for help either. We expect most requests will come from those churches in between."

By having staff members deployed around the country, the General Board hopes to reverse some of the perception that power and decisions are concentrated at denominational headquarters, and recognize that the strength of the denomination is in its churches. "Our job will be getting out there," Timmons says. "We need to be in front of people. If we make ourselves available we'll get more requests."

Congregational Life Team coordinators acknowledge that their work may remain somewhat vague until they get some experience and a track record. The areas to be served are huge and the staffs small. "There's much more work than human resources," says Jan Kensinger. Jeff Glass, CLT coordinator for Area 5, the western states, recalls the biblical example of Jethro confronting Moses about the need to delegate work. "We may ask for volunteers to help us," he says.

These ministry pioneers know that many in the church are skeptical of the General Board's new venture, but many also are hopeful that it will succeed and flourish. David Smalley, CLT coordinator for Area 4, the Plains districts, expresses his optimism this way: "Transitions hold the possibility for transformation."

Meet the team

By mid-January, 12 Congregational Life Team members had been hired—4 full time and 8 half time. Three more half-time CLTs were expected to be added to the staff.

The team members are:

Area 1

Jan Kensinger, coordinator. Currently a resident of Hummelstown, Pa., she grew up in Roaring Spring, Pa. She received her B.S. degree from Juniata College and is currently a student at the Bethany Seminary satellite and Lancaster Theological Seminary. Kensinger served as associate for youth ministry and then as associate district executive in Atlantic Northeast District from 1985 to 1996. Recently she served as pastor and chaplain at Brethren Home Community in New Oxford, Pa. She is a member of the board of the Association of Brethren Caregivers and serves as ABC's treasurer. *Telephone: (toll free) 888-411-4275.*

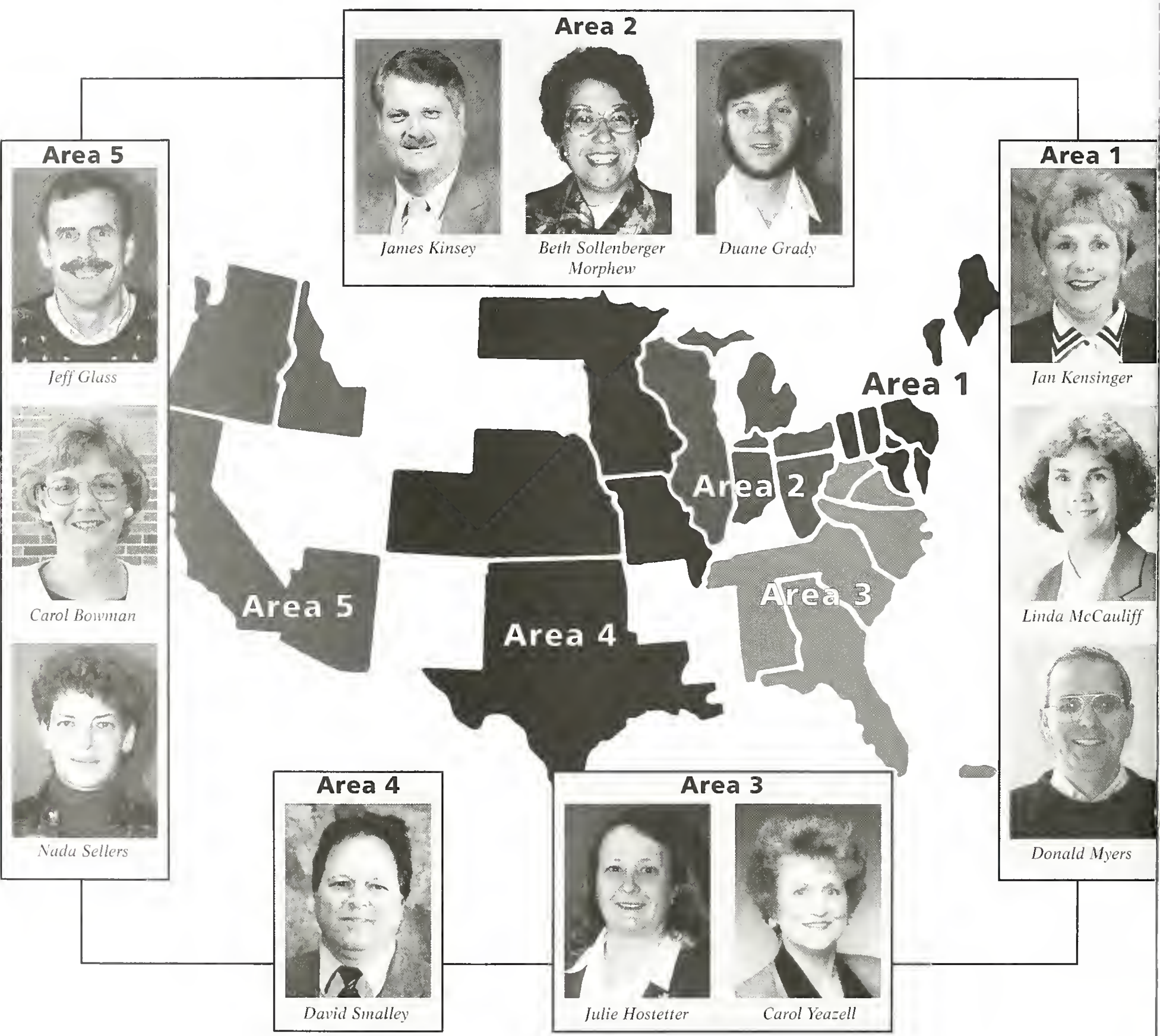
Linda McCauliff (half-time). A resident of Johnstown, Pa., she will continue to serve half time as the associate district minister for Western Pennsylvania District. An ordained minister, McCauliff completed the three-year reading course, graduated from TRIM, and is currently enrolled in a degree completion program at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pa. *Telephone: 814-254-1048.*

Donald E. Myers (half-time). Donald is currently serving as the interim district executive for Southern Pennsylvania District. He is an ordained minister and the moderator of the East Fairview (Pa.) congregation where he has been active teacher, Sunday school superintendent, church secretary, and youth advisor. Myers retired as principal of the Dallastown Area Middle School in 1997, a position he held for 20 years following four years as assistant principal. He serves as adjunct professor for the Education Department of York College of Pennsylvania.

Myers received his B.A. degree from Elizabethtown College, has an M.Ed. from Western Maryland College, and an Ed.D. from Temple University (Philadelphia). He and his wife, Doris, live in York, Pa., and have three sons and two grandchildren.

Area 2

Beth Sollenberger Morphew, coordinator. A resident of Elgin, Ill., She



James Kinsey

Beth Sollenberger Morphew

Duane Grady

Jeff Glass

Carol Bowman

Nada Sellers

Jan Kensinger

Linda McCauliff

Donald Myers

David Smalley

Julie Hostetter

Carol Yeazell

grew up in Pennsylvania. She received her undergraduate degree from Juniata College and her master of divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary. Since 1994 she has served as the director of stewardship education on the General Board staff. Before that she served as associate pastor of the Sebring (Fla.) congregation for two years, pastored the Pleasant Hill (Ohio) congregation for five years, and was co-pastor of the Hagerstown (Md.) congregation for two years. *Telephone: 800-323-8039.*

Duane Grady (half-time). Grady will continue his responsibilities as co-pastor of the Northview Church of the Brethren in Indianapolis, Ind. He has an M.A.Th. degree from Bethany Theological Seminary. Prior experience includes serving as program associate at the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, Lombard, Ill., coordinator of the Iowa Peace Network in Des Moines, and executive director of the Interfaith Council for the Homeless in Chicago. Grady is coordinator of TRIM in South/Central Indiana District. *Telephone: 317-546-3220.*

James L. Kinsey (half-time). A resident of Lake Odessa, Mich., Kinsey will continue his responsibilities as district minister in Michigan District. He grew up in Mt. Morris, Ill., and is a graduate of Manchester College and Bethany Theological Seminary. He is certified as a trainer and coordinator for rural/small town congregations. He has served as pastor of the First Church of the Brethren in Marion, Ohio, and Hope Church of the Brethren in Freeport, Mich. Most recently Kinsey served the denomination as interim co-director of the Ministry office. *Telephone: 616-374-8066.*

Area 3

Julie Hostetter, coordinator. A resident of Roanoke, Va., Hostetter was raised in Palmyra, Pa. A graduate of Lebanon Valley College, she received her M.Div. from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. She has been a co-pastor with her husband, Michael, in an urban congregation; an adjunct faculty member and administrator at United Theological Seminary; an interim pastor of Chesterfield Fellowship Church of the Brethren in Virlina; and a minister of music at West Richmond Church of the Brethren, Richmond, Va. *Telephone: 540-562-2884.*

Carol Yeazell (half-time). Yeazell will also serve as half-time executive minister for Atlantic Southeast District. An ordained minister, she has served as interim pastor for the Winter Park Church of the Brethren in Winter Park, Fla. She is fluent in Spanish and has had extensive experience in Puerto Rico and Central America. She has served as executive director of Beth-El Farm Worker Ministry in Florida, and most recently as executive direcor of the US—Mexico Chamber of Commerce, Gulf States Region. She also operated a family business for 25 years. She and her husband, Gene, and daughter, Melody, live in Valrico, Fla., and are members of the Good Samaritan Church of the Brethren in Brandon. *Telephone: 813-654-5054.*

Another half-time CLT member is expected to be hired for Area 3.

Area 4

David Smalley, coordinator. A resident of St. John, Kan., Smalley is pastor of the Eden Valley Church of the Brethren. He will continue half-time in that position until April, when he will become full-time as Congregational Life Team coordinator. He grew up in Florida, where he attended the Winter Park Church of the Brethren. He is a graduate of Manchester College and has taken course work at Bethany Theological Seminary. Smalley pastored the Pittsburg (Ind.) Church of the Brethren and the Fairview (Pa.) Church of the Brethren. He has been active on district boards and camping programs. *Telephone: (toll free) 888-526-9589.*

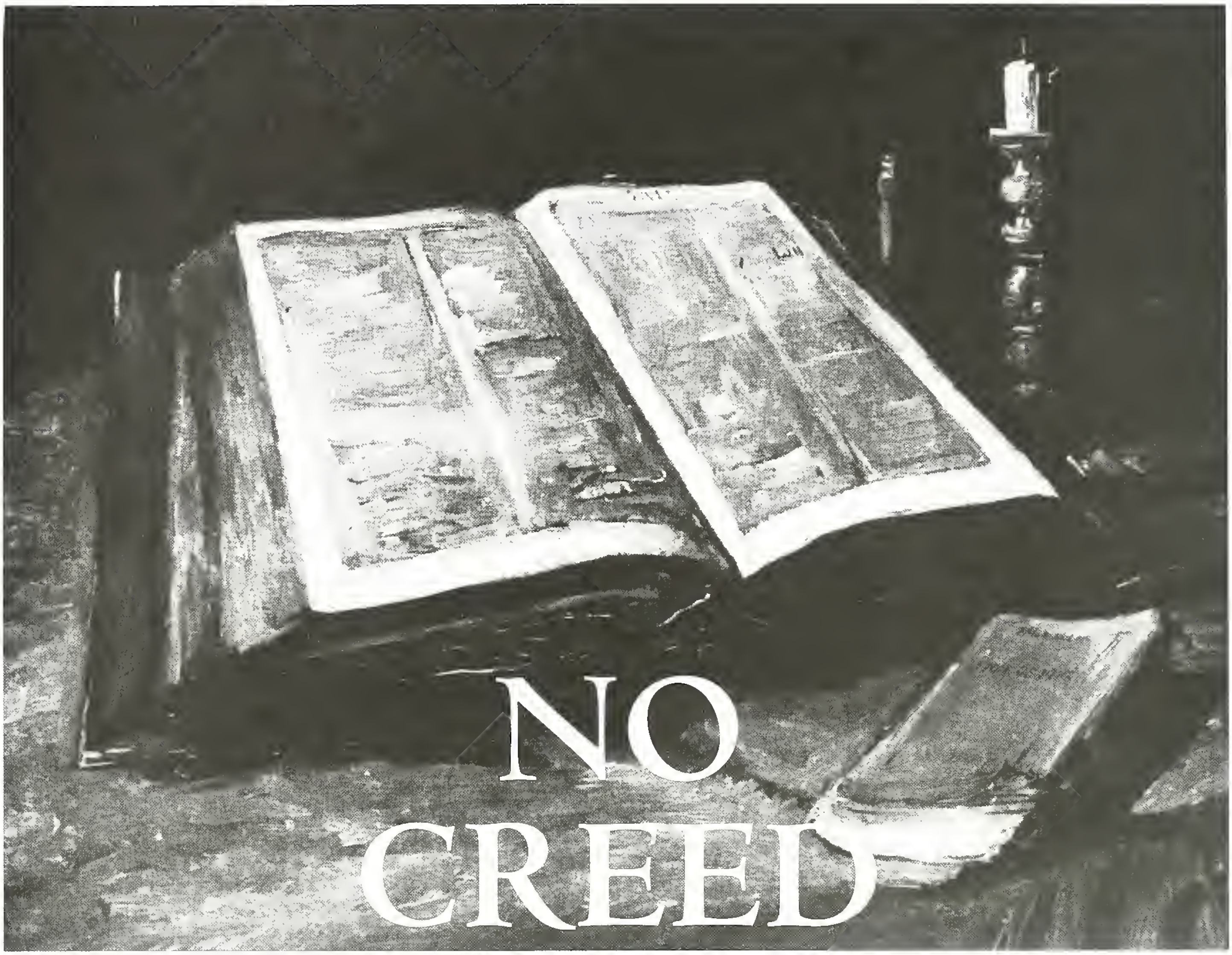
Another half-time CLT member is expected to be hired for Area 4.

Area 5

Jeff Glass, coordinator (half-time). A resident of San Diego, Calif., Glass recently served as pastor of First Church of the Brethren in San Diego. He is a graduate of the University of La Verne and Bethany Theological Seminary. He has been pastor of Laton (Calif.) Church of the Brethren and co-pastor at Hagerstown (Md.) Church of the Brethren. He has served on a number of district committees and was a founding steering committee member of CoBACE. *Telephone: (toll free) 888-826-4951.*

Carol Bowman (half-time). A resident of Wenatchee, Wash., Bowman was born and raised on the Nigerian mission field and returned to teach there. She is a graduate of the University of La Verne, where she has also done graduate work. She is a former General Board member. She has worked as administrative staff support for Oregon-Washington district and for a United Church of Christ conference, and as a legal assistant in a law firm. *Telephone: 509-663-2833.*

Nada Sellers (half-time). Sellers will continue to serve half-time as pastor of the Pasadena (Calif.) Church of the Brethren. A graduate of Yale University, she has an M.Div. from Fuller Theological Seminary and is ordained by the Church of the Brethren. She is moving toward completion of a certificate in the Art of Spiritual Direction program from the Center for Spiritual Development in Orange, Calif. She has served as advisor for pre-Ph.D. students at Fuller School of Theology, music director and then associate pastor at First Mennonite Church in Upland, Calif., and chaplain coordinator for Community Hospice Care, Inc., San Bernardino, Calif. She has served on the boards of the Center for Anabaptist Leadership in Los Angeles and Camp La Verne, Inc. *Telephone: 626-797-3235.*



Religion News Service

NO CREED BUT THE BIBLE

BY FRANK RAMIREZ

What I remember best from my days as a student at Bethany Theological Seminary are the stories told by the faculty. That solid rabbinical technique of illustrating lessons with sharp and memorable stories was used by most of my teachers there. One in particular, told by Dale Brown, comes to mind. It goes like this.

There was a godless man who fell down a well. During that hopeless time he spent at the bottom he discovered Christ and his need to depend upon others. After he was saved from the well he wanted to share this great gift of grace with others.

So he went around pushing people down wells.

The point of the story is that most of us expect others to find Christ exactly as we did, when there are as many paths to the good news of salvation as there are people. I thought about this a lot in the wake of the debate centering on a few little words.

Those words are in two Annual Conference statements, one from 1991 that "affirms that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, savior of the world and the head of the church, according to the scriptures." The other is from the 1995 Annual Conference, which called upon members and ministers to "clearly affirm the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only divine Lord and Savior." In this case the word "only" was the focus of the question.

I have no problem with either statement, and I suspect that most Brethren from Alexander Mack to the present would have had no problem endorsing these propositions. But the debate didn't center on the veracity of the claim. Rather, concern was expressed that this quibbling over words might be leading us to a creedalism that we have avoided over the nearly three hundred years of our history. Moreover, some wondered if as the years went by we would simply continue to add words and phrases until we finally had a creed.

We Brethren have stated that we have no creed but the New Testament. The New Testament is a lot longer than the shorthand theology that composes a creed, so the question should be asked, what is a creed, and what's wrong with it?

A creed is a formal statement of belief. It's a very helpful thing to have, to be honest. Take what is known as the Nicene Creed, which I recited every Sunday as a child. It begins like this:

"I believe in one God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and of all things seen and unseen.

"And I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. Born of the Father before all ages, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, being of one being with the Father, by whom all things were made: who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was made flesh by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man...."

The Nicene Creed is a fairly compact statement of faith. What's to argue with? Why don't we just have every member of the Church of the Brethren sign the thing and be done with it?

I think we Brethren have avoided establishing a creed for two reasons. The first was that creeds were used by state churches as a basis for persecution of non-state churches, such as the Brethren. They were a litmus test to see who fit and who didn't fit within boundaries that were not established by the Bible but rather by church tradition.

The second and more important reason we have and should continue to avoid creeds has to do with the way Brethren do Bible study: in communion with each other.

No one should be asked to affirm either Annual Conference statement —or any other faith statement—until they have engaged in Bible study. Nor is it necessary to do so in order to begin the Christian journey. I was struck during my study of the Gospel of Mark how those who followed Jesus least understood who he was. The Gerasene Demoniac had no questions about the supremacy of Jesus. And the Samaritan woman at the well saw Jesus and recognized him. Yet the disciples, even after witnessing the calming of the storm or the feeding of the five thousand, asked each other, "Who then is this?"

Recognition that Jesus is Lord is essential to beginning the Christian journey. The rest takes time and may involve a different path than my own. Remember the man who pushed others down wells? When we recite a creed without doing the work, we're assuming we can get there by the same road. But Paul's journey was different from that given to Apollos and Priscilla and Aquila and Peter and all the rest!

BRETHREN STUDY THE BIBLE TOGETHER BECAUSE THE JOURNEY TO FAITH IS THE IMPORTANT PART.

Of course that means we won't all share the same signposts or landmarks as are found on someone else's journey. We have to trust God to bring people to the kingdom by a path he has chosen. But the destination, the New Jerusalem, will be the same.

One fact scripture readers discover is that believers coming to the text can honestly understand the words of the Bible itself in a different fashion. Study of not only English translations, but also the original biblical language, can lead to honest debate. What is actually expressed in the Bible, and what is based on interpretation over the centuries? You would be surprised how many basic assumptions shared by Christians have no basis in the text of the New Testament.

A few years ago I attended a conference at Elizabethtown College on the social transformation of the Church of the Brethren. Chris Bucher, an associate professor of religion there, gave one of the addresses, and called to mind her childhood memory of her grandmother's old black leather-bound Schofield Bible, which had the place of honor in the middle of the living room. She recalled how more attention was given to carefully dusting around it than in reading it.

So in her talk called "Brethren and the Bible in the 20th Century," Bucher warned that "US culture treats the Bible as an icon, and venerates it as an object without paying attention to its contents." She quoted statistics that seemed to indicate that while both Brethren and American society understood the Bible to be the word of God, most people have a profound ignorance regarding it, and only 17 percent read it daily. She encouraged regular Bible study, noting, "Brethren have used scholarly methods for the purpose of discovering the meaning of the Bible for our day, and not to discredit it." Bucher stressed that historically Brethren have read the Bible with the assumption that it should lead to action.

If we were to agree that Bible study is essential to form faith statements, the next question is, what sort of Bible study? If we all read the scriptures and came up with different interpretations, how do we decide which is the right one?

Recently I called upon all members of my church to take part in ten-week Bible studies, and more than half signed up. Also I led a small group through a program of reading the entire Bible in one year.

In both these endeavors I tried to model what I think is the true, biblical method of Bible study. I learned a lot about this method through a lecture given by Reneeta J. Weems at the "Consultation on Biblical Literacy," which I attended with several members of the Church of the Brethren in February 1994.

Weems, a professor of Old Testament at Vanderbilt University, who was an economist before she became an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, suggested that the best way to promote biblical literacy might not have anything to do with promoting more Bible reading.

Speaking about people who lived during what we might call "Bible Times," she said, "Reading and formal study were privileges and luxuries for the mass of people eking out a living. Religious instruction was an oral event, done in community, not in print, and done within the context of worship."

In examining the biblical record Weems suggested that "private study of the written text was unheard of." She focused on consistent use of the words "hear" and "tell" in the Bible to emphasize the oral nature of the biblical experience.

She was especially drawn to the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in the eighth chapter of the Book of Acts. In that episode the eunuch is reading the Isaiah scroll when the apostle Philip is sent to him. According to Weems it is "the sole example of what we might call scripture study.

"Even he – a literate slave – cannot understand what he is reading. This underscores the difference between reading and understanding.

"Interpretation and study are properly done in communion with believers, in dialog with scripture and each other.

"We have ample evidence throughout the world of religious people, devout, genuine, authentic, and law-abiding, who have never read a page of their holy text in their lives."

As an example of the way in which community Bible study worked, Weems called to mind her childhood in an African American Pentecostal church.

"Elder Riley and Deacon Foxworth railed at each other about the meaning of a text. Thirty adults and one child, myself, came early so we could watch them trade rhetorical punches about the true meaning of the flood, the virgin birth, the creation, how many Johns are there anyway in the New Testament, and why the rapture would more likely take place in the day as well as the night."

ONE ADVANTAGE TO GROUP STUDY OVER INDIVIDUAL STUDY IS THAT IT PROVIDES A SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES.

She reflected on how often they would pause to add, "Do you see what I'm saying?" Reading had nothing to do with it.

If you have had the pleasure of reading a slim volume called *The Complete Writings of Alexander Mack*, published by the Brethren Encyclopedia Inc., it is clear that this is precisely the method of Bible study employed the early Brethren. It is for this reason that we refer to Mack only as a "co-founder" of the church. The Brethren in concert studied scripture for the answers to hard questions, and they emphasized that again and again in their writings. They read the Bible together and formed their conclusions jointly. Brethren have long felt that Bible study is group study, because we are a people, not primarily persons.

One advantage to group study over individual study is that it provides a system of checks and balances. Many people approach the text as if it were a tool. They may have an aim in mind, and select verses that support their argument. They then expect others to jump through these biblical hoops so that they reach the same conclusions.

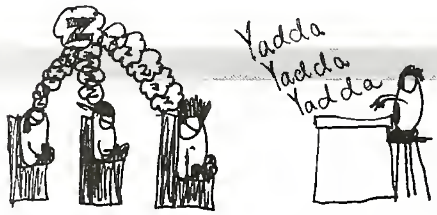
The larger the circle of Bible study, the better. You may begin with a small group in your church, and then draw in others. Take advantage of district conference and Annual Conference Bible studies, as well as those available in the larger Christian body. Curriculum aids published by Brethren Press are helpful tools.

Signing on to a creed is like reading the end of a book without going through all the intervening chapters. It's trying to bypass the process. You can't. Studying the Bible together is an important first step. It's an integral part of being Brethren, of being Christian. In this way you can be open to where the word of God wants to lead you, not where you want the word of God to end up.

Frank Ramirez is pastor of the Elkhart Valley Church of the Brethren in Elkhart, Ind..

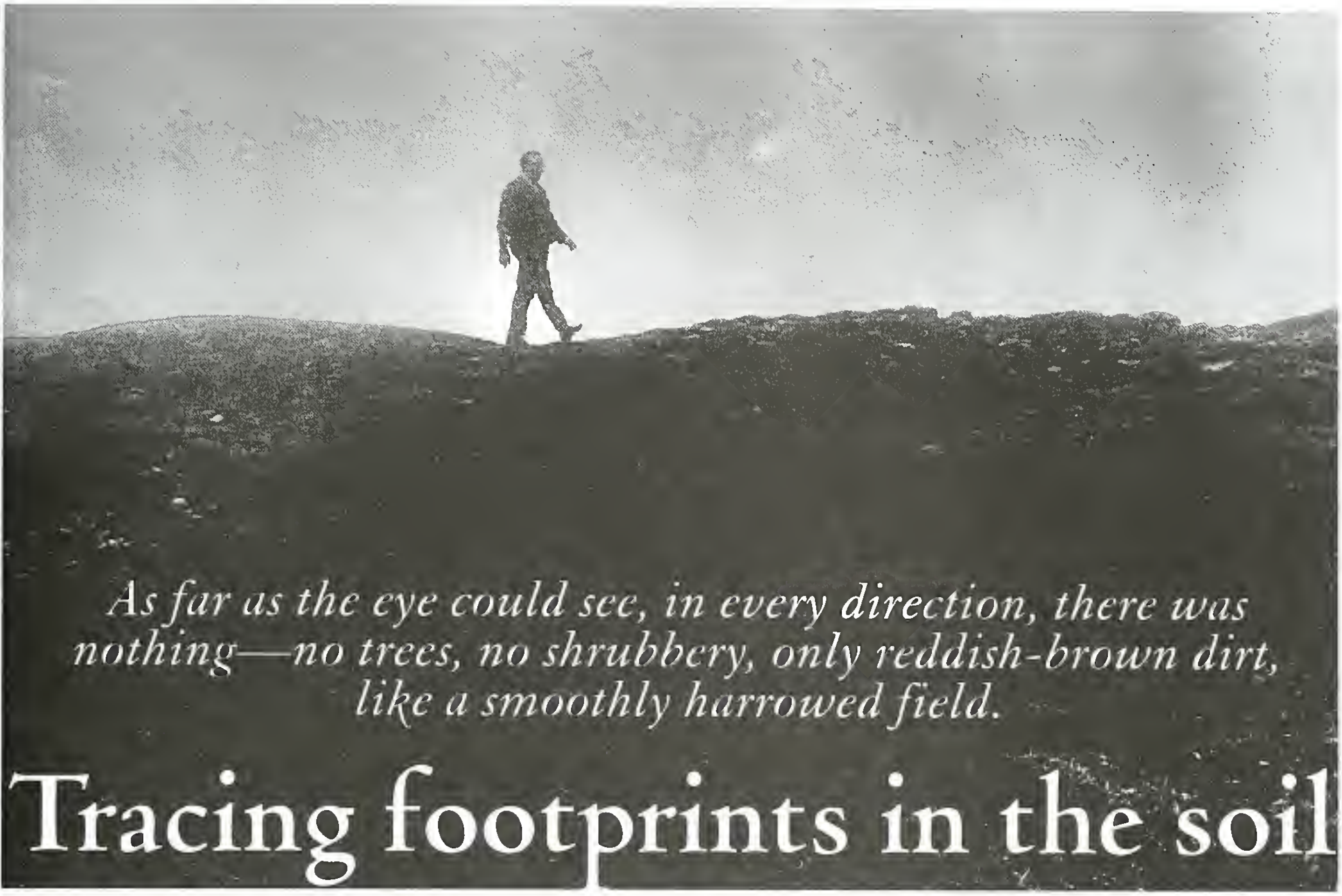
Brethrening

Yada-yada-yada



Recently the Elkhart Valley Church of the Brethren in Elkhart, Ind., held a card shower for pastor Frank Ramirez as part of Pastor's Appreciation Month. The card from the Kauffmann-Kennel family included this cartoon from 10-year-old Michael Kennel, in which he depicted the congregation's reaction to Frank's sermons. Michael is the nephew of Joel Kauffmann, author of the popular Pontius Puddle comic featured in, among other places, MESSENGER. Michael often illustrates Frank's sermons as well.

MESSENGER *would like to publish other short, colorful, and humorous stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submission to* MESSENGER, *Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at fffarrar@midwest.net.*



As far as the eye could see, in every direction, there was nothing—no trees, no shrubbery, only reddish-brown dirt, like a smoothly harrowed field.

Tracing footprints in the soil

BY JOSEPH M. MASON

My name is Joseph. I do not own an "Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat." I am not a frequent dreamer, nor am I gifted as an interpreter of dreams.

Nevertheless, several weeks ago I had a very vivid dream. I found myself in the middle of what appeared to be a huge field. The soil looked like the red clay of Orange County, Va., near where I lived as a child.

As far as the eye could see, in every direction, there was nothing—no trees, no shrubbery, only reddish-brown dirt, like a smoothly harrowed field. It was like being lost in a great desert. I did feel lost. I had no sense of direction.

Then I began looking around more intently. Finally I looked behind me. There behind me, as straight as one might draw a line, as far as I could see, were my footprints in the soil.

I now knew the direction from which I had come. I now knew that I could turn and follow my footprints back. Or I could keep going straight ahead, guided by the line that had brought me thus far. Or I could go to the right or the left.

I no longer felt disoriented or lost. I felt relaxed and confident. Since the direction from which I had come became clear to me, I was sure I could now find my way.

Not long before I dreamed this dream, I read an article by Dale Stouffer in a journal called *Old Order Notes.* Stouffer addressed the question of where Brethren have come from—tracing their footprints in the soil. The theme or thread that he sees running all through Brethren history, from Schwarzenau to the present, is *discipleship*—being a follower of Jesus, living according to the example and teachings of Jesus. While others developed creeds, christological understandings, doctrinal positions, liturgical practices, the Brethren focus was to "live according to the example and teachings of Jesus."

Surely Brethren have not taken Jesus Christ more seriously than many others. Others have placed great emphasis on the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection, the meaning of grace, of the atonement. Recently, leading scholars have been examining with new fervor who Jesus was and what he said and did.

But Brethren in general have not emphasized scholarly pursuits, or even rigid biblicism. Rather, we have put our emphasis on walking in his steps, seeking to "live according to the example and teachings of Jesus."

When I saw those footprints in the soil, and when I saw juxtaposed alongside them a clear Brethren theme, tracing from the present back to our beginnings, I was overwhelmed with the feeling that we are not lost, that we do have a sense of direction. I knew then that I would come to Elgin to join in "continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together."

Joseph M. Mason began January 5 as interim executive director of the Church of the Brethren General Board. This article is abridged from a chapel message given to employees at the General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

Out from the ashes comes A DREAM FULFILLED

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY NEVIN DULABAUM

When three vandals on March 31, 1996, decided that the quaint, one-room Butler Chapel A.M.E. church 7.5 miles northwest of Orangeburg, S.C., was too much of a nuisance, they broke into that building—which is set back one-tenth of a mile off the main highway—and, in an act of violence and hatred, set it on fire.

If destruction was their goal, the racially motivated arsonists couldn't have known what they were doing.

This past January, Butler Chapel dedicated a beautiful, new facility, which stands today largely because the Church of the Brethren General Board's Emergency Response/Service Ministries decided to coordinate its largest construction project ever. Some 200 Brethren volunteers and about 300 other volunteers from Butler Chapel, 10 churches from Maine, a Presbyterian church from New York, and an A.M.E. congregation from Pennsylvania labored on the construction project under the direction of Brethren supervisors. Many of the volunteers—Brethren and non-Brethren—returned for the dedication weekend. The Brethren who returned arrived by car, plane, and—for a group of about 40—on the York (Pa.) First Church of the Brethren bus.

Thus, the 500-plus people who attended the three-day dedication event in January were there to celebrate, dedicate, honor God, and to reunite

Rocking the church. *A number of choirs and singing groups that produced toe-tapping, hand-clapping, get-on-your feet music were featured throughout the dedication weekend. Often the congregation sang along, like this group of Brethren from Indiana and Virginia (below).*

From preaching to greeting. *John Hurst Adams, presiding A.M.E. bishop (above left), preached during the Butler Chapel dedication service and then presented pastor Patrick Mellerson with a $50,000 check to help pay for rebuilding costs.*

(Above) Lydia Walker and Miller Davis of the General Board's Emergency Response Service Ministries greet Mellerson in his study during their tour of the new Butler Chapel church. Around Mellerson's neck is his 1997 Annual Conference name tag, which he proudly wore throughout the dedication weekend.

with fellow volunteers. Lines of all kinds—race, age, gender, religious affiliation, geography—were transcended in this spiritually charged reunion making it one of those "you had to be there in person" events to fully absorb the emotions, sights, sounds, and presence of God that radiated throughout.

Several worship services that featured multiple speakers and building-rocking music from a variety of choirs were the weekend's focal points. Each service leading up to the Sunday af-

Standing proud. *The new Butler Chapel church is located on a 7.5-acre parcel of land, about a quarter mile away from the old church. Though the old structure will eventually be razed, Butler Chapel will continue owning the 15 acres that building sits on, which includes the congregation's cemetery.*

ternoon dedication honored a different group that had participated in the project. One commonality among the services was the frequent use of the word "miracle," with many examples of miracles cited.

After the former Butler Chapel building was burned, local authorities were slow to investigate the crime until several people with ties to the local media learned of the details at a restaurant while being waited on by a church member's granddaughter. Butler Chapel pastor Patrick Mellerson soon found himself in Washington, D.C., attending a summit on the black church burnings epidemic in the south with President Clinton and other national and state officials. Mellerson's appearance in Washington led to Butler Chapel's involvement with the National Council of Churches, which is spearheading a multimillion-dollar project of rebuilding burned black churches. The NCC eventually brought Butler Chapel and the Church of the Brethren together. Several miracles in one.

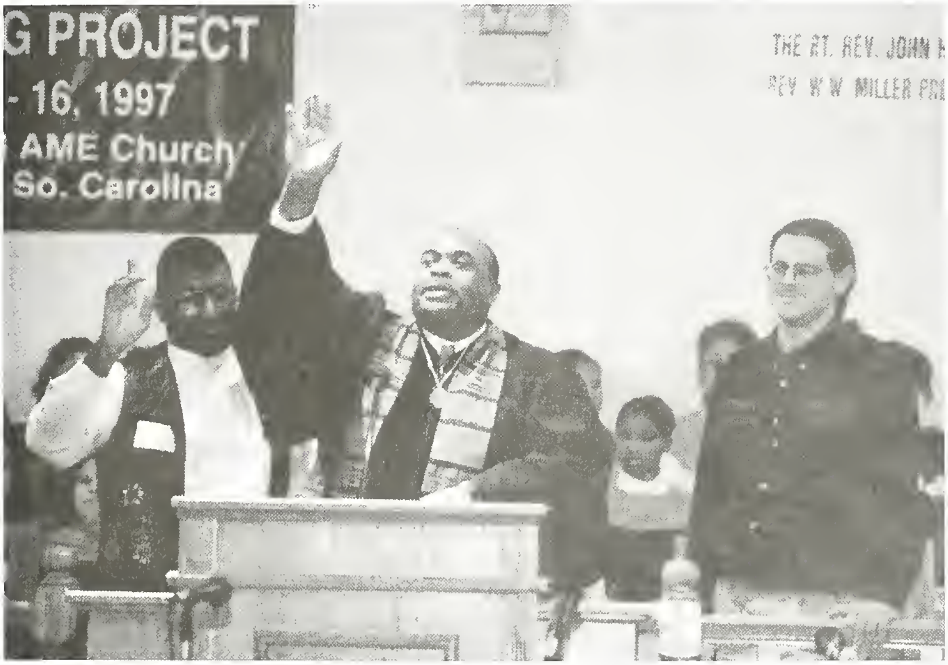
Tours of the new church and the old—which still stands about a quarter mile away—offered quite a contrast: The new is fully air conditioned with a sanctuary, two classrooms, library, social hall, pastor's study, choir room, study loft, and burglar and closed-circuit television systems—amenities that will allow the congregation to attract new members. Another miracle.

The new church sits on 7.5 acres of land heavily covered with pine trees. These trees, according to Mellerson, will be slowly harvested for lumber. Seedlings will then be planted, thus producing additional, perpetual income. Another miracle.

And it could be considered a miracle that so many of the project volunteers felt called to return for the dedication.

Most poignant, however, is the miracle of what brought the Butler Chapel volunteers together in the first place.

Prior to 1997, none of the groups that worked on the project knew of each other. And yet a denomination, a community coalition of churches, and two other congregations each spent time and money to help rebuild a church hundreds of miles away. Butler Chapel members, who could have easily given up in the midst of the struggles of regrouping and rebuilding, did not. For months they worked with and fed their guests. The single thread that tied together these people of different religious affiliations and



Crusader for Christ. *With pastor Patrick Mellerson to his right, pastor Samuel Jenkins of Bristol (Pa.) A.M.E. church honors Torin Eikenberry, who spent seven months last year helping rebuild Butler Chapel as a Brethren Volunteer Service worker. Although Jenkins worked with Eikenberry only one week last spring when he volunteered at the project, Jenkins was so impressed by Eikenberry's spirituality and sincerity that he presented the BVSer with a Jerusalem Cross, signifying that Eikenberry is a crusader for Christ.*

A gift from the heart and hand. *Gerri Irving (at podium), Miller Davis, and Torin Eikenberry present a quilt to the Butler Chapel congregation on behalf of the Church of the Brethren, along with a Brethren hymnal and accompanying compact disks. The quilt was handmade by Louise Hartle of Hagerstown, Md., and includes the names of all of the volunteer workers.*

(Below) Members of the Manchester Church of the Brethren—Ambrosia Brown (speaking), Torin Eikenberry, and Judy Brown—thank Butler Chapel for the $3,000 raised to help rebuild their church, which was destroyed by fire earlier that week.

different color was their love for Christ and their desire to help sisters and brothers of God—both testimonies of faith. Miracles, indeed.

In the midst of the celebrating it was announced that the Manchester Church of the Brethren in North Manchester, Ind., had been destroyed by fire earlier that week. It was evident that Mellerson was affected by this news, as he had been touched by Manchester pastor Susan Boyer's two visits to Butler Chapel last year. He also was touched by Manchester member Torin Eikenberry, who for seven months last year served as a Brethren Volunteer Service worker at Butler Chapel. Despite the loss of their church, Eikenberry and two other Manchester members attended the Butler Chapel dedication.

Saturday night Mellerson announced that the service's offering would be given to the Manchester church. He asked for the congregation to raise $1,000 to help those who helped Butler Chapel when it was in need. At the close of the service, Mellerson announced that $2,700 was raised. After a moment, the sound technician—a man with no ties to Butler Chapel other than his job—said he didn't like odd numbers. "Let's make it an even $3,000," he said. Such was the power of the Spirit.

Retired Brethren pastor Glenn Kinsel, who served as project supervisor for Emergency Response/Service Ministries, was honored for his behind-the-scenes work by being asked to preach during the Sunday morning worship service, the service that honored the Church of the Brethren.

Kinsel said memories of two of his life's experiences—privileges he called them—were welling up in his soul throughout the weekend. The first was his experience of standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial some 35 years ago to hear Martin Luther King Jr. proclaim: "I have a dream."

"And I have continued to live with that dream until the second great experience—being asked to be involved with the Butler Chapel project. Is this not, at least for those here and now today, a fulfilling of that dream? Of course it is, and we shout hallelujah!"

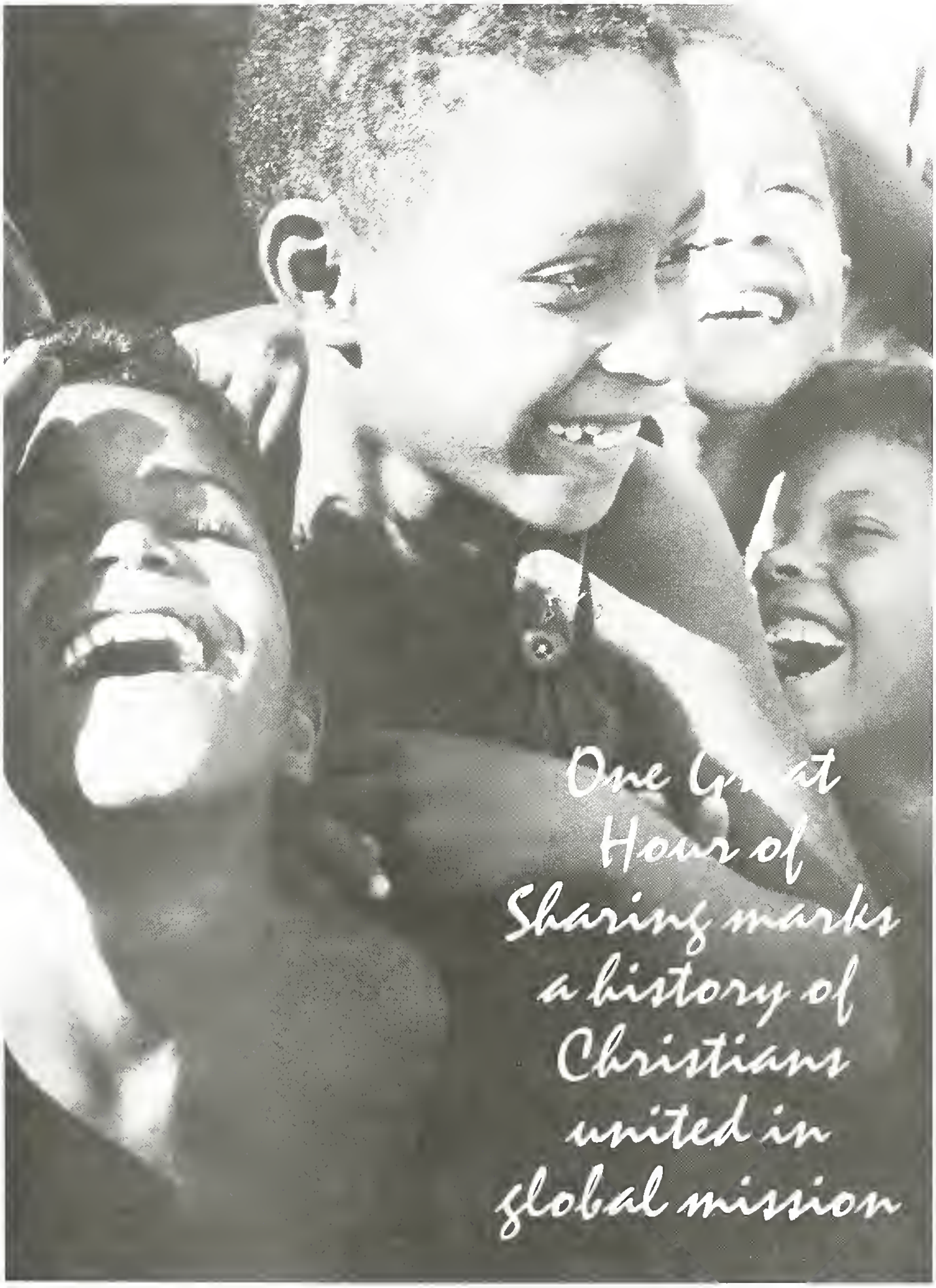
In March 1996, the unassuming, hidden Butler Chapel church was hardly known even by the people of Orangeburg. Today the congregation resides in a huge, brick structure adjacent to the highway. A tall steeple serves as a beacon calling people in, including the church's 500 new friends from a handful of states.

If destruction was the goal of the three vandals nearly two years ago, they couldn't have known what they were doing, for now something much more mighty towers above that hatred.

Additional coverage of the Butler Chapel rebuilding and dedication is available at the official Church of the Brethren web site, http://www.Brethren.org.

What makes a Great Hour?

BY FLETCHER FARRAR


One Great Hour of Sharing marks a history of Christians united in global mission

Phil Grout

It is a great name for a mission appeal, full of ecumenicity and global love. One Great Hour of Sharing takes place on March 22 this year, a day when members of the Church of the Brethren and nine other denominations will be encouraged to "be transformed" and contribute to a special global outreach offering. For one great hour Christians of the United States will be joining together to share their resources with the needy of the world.

The butterfly is the symbol for One Great Hour materials that are already in the hands of most congregations. "The butterfly, long a Christian symbol for the resurrection, suggests transformation," reads the leader's guide. "It reminds us that the world can be transformed through the power of the risen Christ." Implied also is the message that we too can be transformed by sharing our gifts and resources with those in need.

Brethren have long been generous in their response to One Great Hour of Sharing. It is traditionally the largest by far of the three major denomination-wide offering appeals, generally bringing in upwards of $250,000 for Church of the Brethren programs worldwide. Much of the money goes to the overseas work of Brethren Volunteer Service. These funds also have gone to the New Sudan Council of Churches and to support work in Nigeria. Brethren projects in Europe, India, Latin

America, and the Caribbean has been aided by the "Great Hour."

How did the name come about? During and after World War II Protestant churches appealed to their members for funds to aid relief and reconstruction. In 1946, Episcopal Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill challenged Episcopalians to raise "one million dollars in one hour." Then in 1949, church leaders from several denominations formed an ad hoc committee to organize an appeal to support the separate campaigns of American churches. They issued a joint statement that still inspires: "This nationwide united effort by America's Christians has an importance far beyond the practical goal of fund raising. For this great joint program will not only strengthen the vitally important relief and rehabilitation work of the churches overseas, but will also prove to all the world how great is the power generated when Christians unite in a common cause."

That first year was kicked off with a radio program called "One Great Hour," which was carried by major networks on Saturday, March 26 at 10 p.m. President Harry Truman brought greetings, and the program featured stars of the day Gregory Peck and Ida Lupino. The broadcast closed with a request that listeners attend their local church the following morning and make a sacrificial contribution. More than 75,000 churches participated. In 1950 the title "One Great Hour of Sharing" was used for the first time, with a logo depicting a church steeple clock with hands fixed at eleven. The "great hour" had shifted from Saturday night radio to Sunday morning church.

One Great Hour has always been an ecumenical effort, with participation varying as denominations changed and merged. Currently the One Great Hour committee includes ten Christian denominations, including the Church of the Brethren, which was one of the founding denominations. The others currently involved are American Baptist Churches USA, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church. In various ways, all of these churches work in cooperation with Church World Service, the relief, development, and refugee assistance arm of the National Council of Churches.

Denominational leaders are already planning for the fiftieth anniversary of One Great Hour of Sharing in 1999, and a "Celebration Manual" to assist congregations in planning next year's appeal has been sent with this year's materials. But though next year's may be a greater hour in terms of the publicity that helps to open hearts and hands, participating churches agree that the need is great today—just as great as it was when the idea was born in 1949. The need is not only to put love into action around the globe, but also to "prove to all the world how great is the power generated when Christians unite in a common cause."

Brethrening

Pour on!

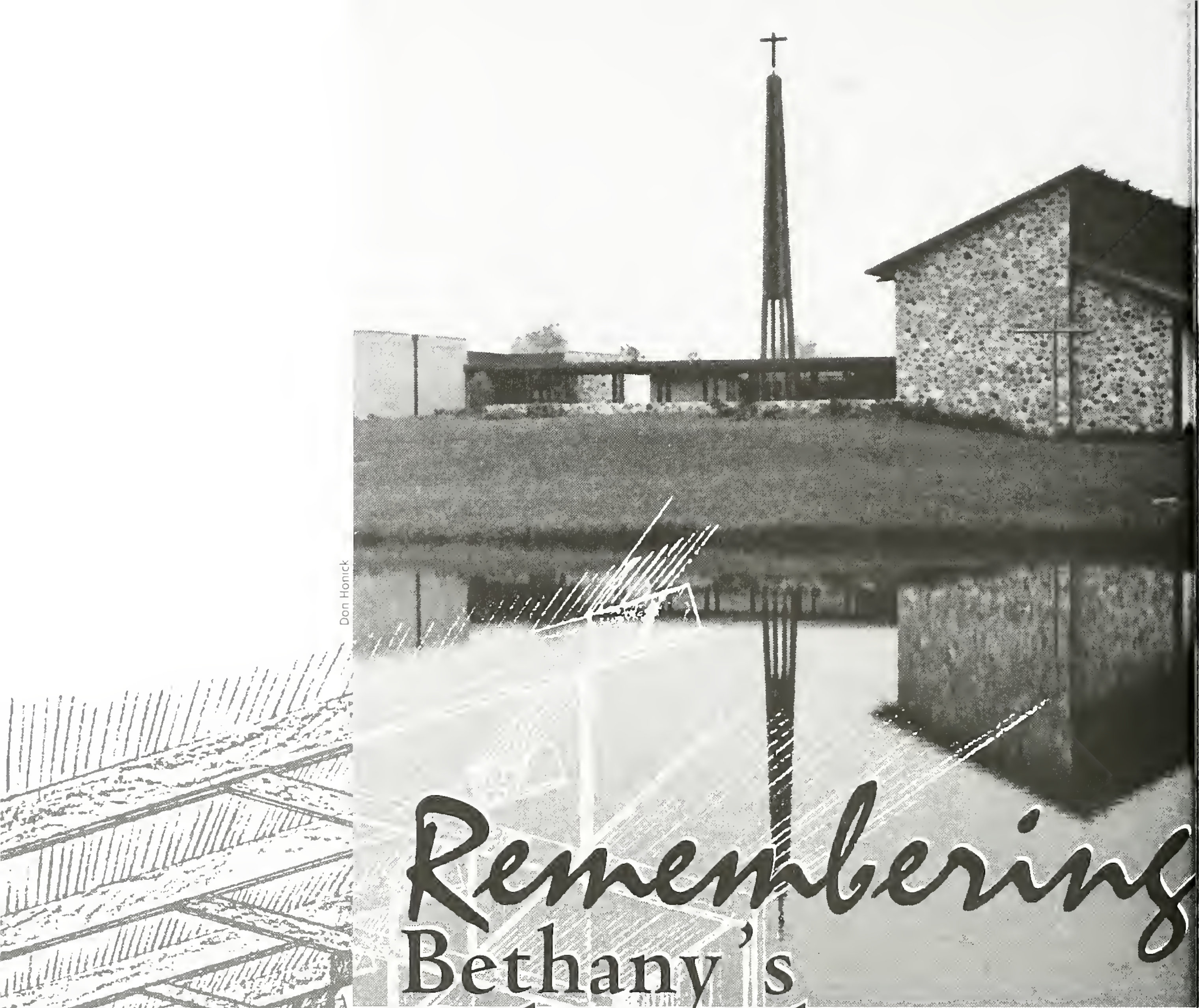
A few years ago I walked into the church on Christmas Eve to find the usual bustle of deacons finishing the preparations for the eucharist, the choir warming up, and families hurrying to get a good seat. I went to the kitchen and greeted the deacon co-chairs, a husband and wife. The husband nudged his wife and asked, "Are you going to tell him?" To which she responded, "If you don't keep quiet I'm going to have to." Dutifully I asked, "What's up?"

The wife recounted how she had gone shopping for the supplies for the eucharist, grape juice and other essentials. She had brought the grocery bags into her kitchen, only to discover that somehow she had picked up prune juice instead of grape juice. "What shall we do?" she asked. My response: "Pour on. There is no way at this hour on Christmas Eve you are going to find a store open with sufficient grape juice to meet our need."

It was one of my most memorable Christmas eucharists. Standing before the congregation as the trays were passed down the pews, I watched as parishioners took a sip, looked at the cup, and then swallowed the remainder with a quizzical look.

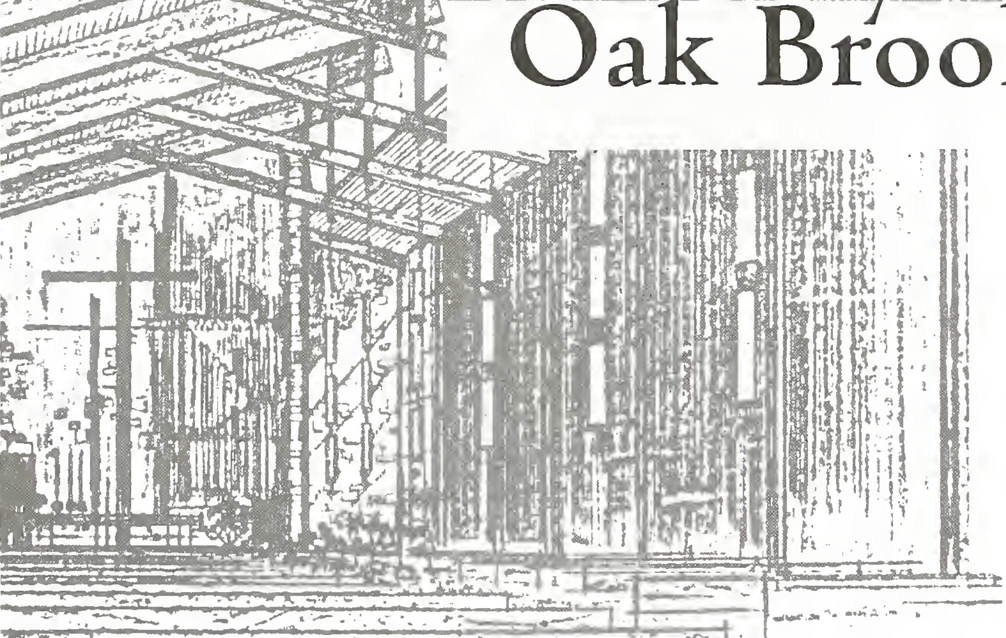
Following the service one of my deacons with a humorous look on his face asked, "Well, parson, what did you think of the wine this evening?" To which I responded, "I think it made for a wonderfully moving service."—Roger L. Forry, pastor, Somerset, Pa.

Messenger *would like to publish other short, colorful, and humorous stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submission to* Messenger, *Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at fffarrar@midwest.net.*



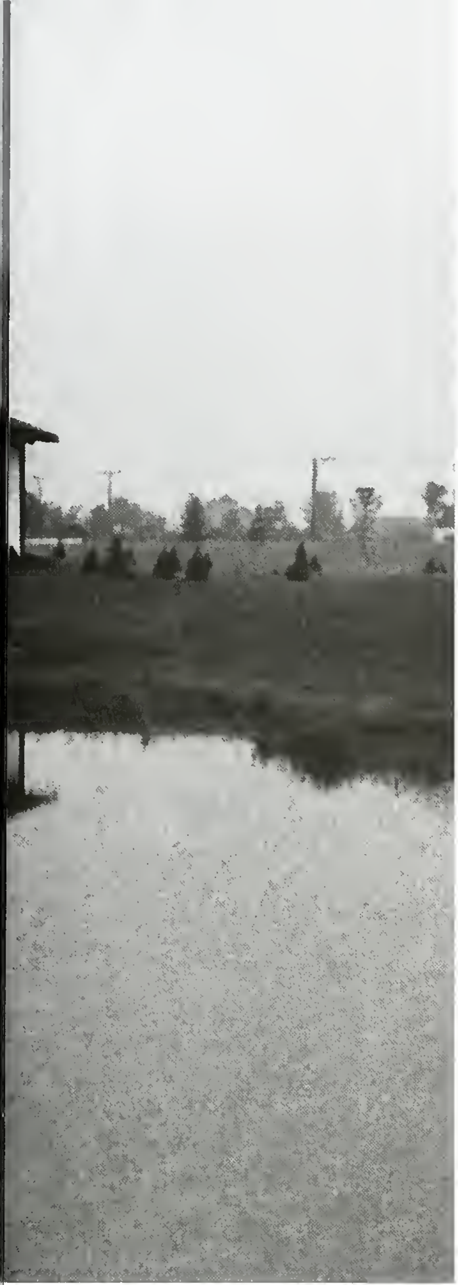
Don Honick

Remembering Bethany's Oak Brook campus



This winter brought the beginning of "site preparation" at the old Oak Brook, Ill. campus of Bethany Theological Seminary. The work of clearing the seminary buildings brought both the anticipation of new construction on the site in the spring and sadness at the final destruction of the old. These remembrance essays, by two who knew and loved the old campus, mark the sadness of its demise while expressing hope for the future of the seminary in its new setting.

Meanwhile, Bethany President Eugene F. Roop reports that plans for the development of the property are



moving along "in good order." The Lombard village trustees were scheduled to vote in late January or early February on zoning and annexation ordinances necessary to allow site plans to proceed. Those plans, which had earlier received a unanimous recommendation for approval from the Lombard planning commission, include condominiums, a hotel, several restaurants, and stores. Galyans Trading Co. was to go before the planning commission to approve its plans for a sporting goods store and Amerisuites had scheduled an informational presentation on its plans for a hotel on the site. Roop said that while much work remains to be done the seminary's board of trustees is "pleased" with progress at the site.

BY JOHN CASSEL

I feel the need to mark the passing of the Oak Brook campus of Bethany Theological Seminary (1963-1997). For 19 years I hosted visitors to the campus and helped them explore both the site and the school. Our family still lives but a short walk to the north. Over the past few months we have watched the campus buildings demolished and its trees uprooted. It's a sad day. The new developer promises Christmas shopping and power lunches within the new year.

I've always considered the Oak Brook campus inspired. Paul Robinson, John Eichelberger, Floyd McDowell, and a host of others put their very souls into the design. They hired architect Charles Stade, a Missouri Synod Lutheran, to help craft a suitable place for the Brethren to do theological education. Mr. Stade spent two years working with the Brethren, attending Annual Conference, talking with faculty and students. The result, while not perfect, was a wonderful expression of Bethany and the church in the early 1960s.

The vision was expansive. The Brethren had just celebrated their 250th anniversary, and the campus was designed for 250 students. The materials and design were, like the Brethren, simple, natural, and "of the earth." Quality and low maintenance were key. The location was part of how we understood ourselves. Chicago was (and is) a "world class" center for theological education. The Brethren played a small but crucial role in this important center. The Brethren helped convene, facilitate, and nurture the corporate life of the 13-school Chicago area theological consortium. We know how to "do community."

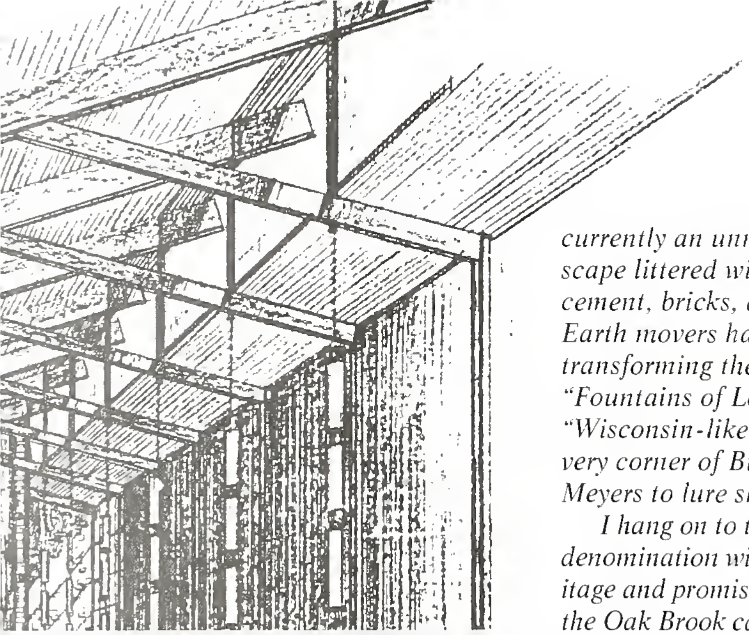
In 1963 the Brethren intended to take our heritage gifts out into the world. Oak Brook was a happening place (note that McDonald's corporation also chose the community as its international headquarters). The seminary campus was oriented out toward the world. While focused outwardly, the campus had a clear center and an open, natural, and retreat-like ethos. With two large retention ponds and quality landscaping, the campus matured into an oasis of green surrounded by too much asphalt. An apple orchard, planted by an Indiana Sunday school class, provided cider and apple sauce for a few generations of students.

A holistic vision nurtured graduate students who spent years using the campus as home base while they developed ministry skills all over metropolitan Chicago. A bell tower and cross overlooked the entire campus—attempting to symbolize the sacredness of study, family, recreation, and leisure, as well as chapel worship. The education emphasized an experiential approach where students had much responsibility for their own education, appropriate for a denomination committed to the priesthood of all believers.

Economic factors precipitated discussion of the school's move. Unfortunately, our increasingly interconnected economy makes long-range planning difficult. Commercial real estate never recovered from the national savings and loan crisis, and visions of a large endowment may not be realized. I think the seminary leadership always assumed a somewhat noble purpose for the property—such as corporate headquarters or highrise offices. But the reality has come down to far less: the Village of Lombard is in the process of approving a "mixed use" for the site: condominiums, restaurants, shops, perhaps a hotel. Interestingly, the property is being developed by the seminary's brokers, the Shaw Company.

Was the Oak Brook Bethany, as an expression of the Church of the Brethren, run over by the dominant culture and American consumerism?

Only time will tell. The campus is



currently an unnaturally barren landscape littered with piles of recycled cement, bricks, and wood chips. Earth movers have already begun transforming the 50 acres into the "Fountains of Lombard" with a "Wisconsin-like" fountain icon at the very corner of Butterfield and Meyers to lure shoppers.

I hang on to the hope that our denomination will never lose the heritage and promise that once existed in the Oak Brook campus. Perhaps the applicable metaphor is a church that is no longer tied to our old locations, however special. We are a church awaiting a new spirit, which will likely surprise us coming from where we least expect it. I hope we will be open enough to sense God's spirit as it moves among us.

John Cassel served Bethany Theological Seminary for 19 years as dean of students and as director of field education. He currently is director of field services for the Illinois Association of School Boards.

Ode to old Bethany

BY DALE W. BROWN

I may not have voted to have you emerge in Oak Brook's prestigious environs. Some prophets said that you were a sign of a growing Brethren edifice complex. However, when we watched you rise from the back yard of our new home, we knew you were well designed.

Martin Marty guided the architects to express our heritage in brick, stone, and beautiful wood. John Eichelberger secured the land in a remarkable way. President Paul Robinson and a committee chaired by Dean Frantz designed a dream campus among lakes and virgin plantings. Each edifice was placed ideally to serve housing, study, worship, and management. The chapel won an architectural award. In a few years the campus was debt-free. Visiting professors frequently judged the classrooms to be the best they had ever experienced. Near the end of your adolescence the plantings had grown so as to portray an established campus.

Why were you bulldozed? You were prematurely sacrificed because the land was assessed to be of more value than you. This would not be true in most realms of the world. Such well-constructed and beautiful buildings could only be destroyed in a throwaway wasteful society.

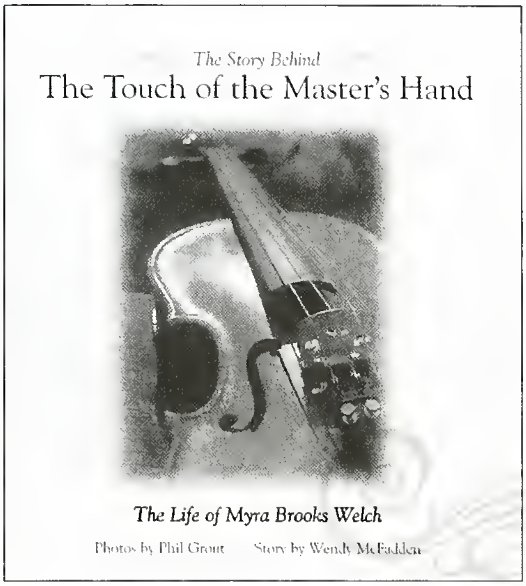
I remember sitting in a room at our Annual Conference. The seminary had hired consultants, who were discerning the mind of the church. A wealthy donor entered. He asked, "How much will you get?" The answer assured: "Between forty and fifty million." The good brother responded: "Sell it, sell it!"

Then the bottom dropped out of the market. Kmart made a substantial offer, but many factors contributed to the rejection of this proposal. One was that in turning over your fate to the realtor and lawyer, we failed to cultivate relationships with the community, except through our excellent field education programs. We had failed to do this through the years. When Bethany moved to Oak Brook, we were determined to quit offering guest rooms to traveling Brethren. As an excellent professional school, we believed it was the duty of others to offer training for the laity. Only in the last years did we bring folk from our congregations for special events. Thus the grassroots never developed the attachment to you they had for the Van Buren Street campus.

To anoint your buried remains seems to be a strange proposal. We can only anoint you on paper, which someday will join you in the earth's ash pits. In the anointing we may wish with you that more members of the board had joined voices in the community in saying: "It would be great if these buildings could be used purposely by someone else!" Even if this were not possible, the words might have helped some feel better. Perhaps you can find some satisfaction in realizing that your beauty forced architects to upgrade their aesthetic proposals for your replacement. And maybe you have a devilish satisfaction in knowing that they did not secure the windfall they thought they would. Hopefully, there will be enough to pay their debts.

We anoint you to honor you for your beautiful presence and service for us. We do so in praying that the well-designed Richmond edifice will continue to serve Christ and our valued heritage. We anoint you because you will continue to abide in the memories of so many. We pray that the campus at Richmond will provide the context for similar sacred memories. We anoint you in helping us work through our grief and anger so we can forgive and forget and support Bethany in its new environs of growing servants for the church.

Dale W. Brown is professor emeritus of Christian theology of Bethany Theological Seminary, where he served on the faculty 32 years before his retirement. He lives in Elizabethtown, Pa., where he relates to and teaches at the Young Center and at Bethany's Susquehanna satellite, both on the campus of Elizabethtown College.



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"It seems like we are retreating on each level.... We need a strong national and global office to lead and aid us in our work. The world needs to hear from the Brethren. Where is our voice?"

The world needs Brethren

Where are the Brethren going?

This has been of deep concern ever since Bethany first talked about closing its doors here in Chicago. But close those doors they did! With their move to Richmond, we lost our valuable ecumenical connections with the other 11 Chicago seminaries—our Association of Chicago Theological Schools. We lost a tremendous opportunity for urban studies and our strong feminist theology and peace studies programs.

At the present time, the Oak Brook seminary property has been destroyed—buildings, homes, trees, everything. The environment is destroyed. The community, the merchants, the neighbors are all deeply upset. What happened to our concern for ecology and our neighbors' good?

We no longer have a director for the Washington Office, to represent us on the national level, to have a voice for the Brethren—a voice direly needed by our national leaders. While I appreciate whatever a volunteer can do, the Brethren need to have one of our respected leaders there speaking for us.

While I do not fully understand all the reorganization, it seems we will no longer have a denominational leader and our office will be split into pieces in various places.

So essentially, the seminary has moved onto another faith's campus in rural Indiana, we have a volunteer in an office in Washington, and we have general offices downsized and dispersed around the country.

Have we lost our vision? Jesus did not tell us to preach to the Brethren. We were told to "go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). The Brethren message of peace, justice, and witness needs to be heard.

It seems like we are retreating on each level. We need a strong theological seminary to train our leaders. We need a strong Washington Office to speak to those who lead our nation. We need a strong national and global office to lead and aid us in our work. The world needs to hear from the Brethren. Where is our voice?

Linda F. Weber
Lombard, Ill.

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Speechless calling for help

The Lafiya program has taught us many things about wholeness of life and that limitations do not detract from wholeness. We have learned not to expect everyone to stand, kneel, or walk up stairs. There are some disorders, however, which are not easily recognized and certainly not understood.

After many frustrating years with a dysfunctional voice, I was diagnosed in 1993 with Spastic Dysphonia, a rare disorder of unknown origin and no known cure. It is characterized by a tremulous, weak, breathy sound, often strained and sometimes reduced to a whisper. It is believed to be caused by the brain sending incorrect messages to muscles controlling the larynx, causing them to contract inappropriately.

I am writing about this because persons affected by this disorder cannot express it. It has been described as "speechless and calling for help." Needless to say, it is life-altering and extremely frustrating.

While some churches are responding to the needs of handicapped people there is still much to be done. In a group setting, well-meaning folks still insist on each one participating, such as introducing oneself, reading a verse, or contributing to the discussion. It is like asking a wheelchair-bound person to run a wild dash. It is impossible and extremely embarrassing not to be able to perform in a normal way. It is a very acute form of agony.

There are some rewards. I am earning patience, I've learned to isten more, and I realize that my comments are not imperative to a situation. In some cases the telemarketers have been scared off!

Sara G. Wilson
Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren
Camp Hill, Pa.

Seagoing cowboy

The article "Brethren remember past by sending 130 cows to Poland" in your December issue reminded me of the seagoing cowboys during the years following World War II. Under the auspices of the United Nations Rehabilitation and Relief Administration, numerous ships loaded with cows, horses, and mules were transported to European countries.

I was one of 32 "cowboys" aboard the ship Clarksville to provide care for 700 Holstein heifers and 93 bulls.

We departed from Newport News, Va., on Easter morning, 1946 and arrived at Nouyport, Poland, on May 6. Our trip was all too eventful with the death of a 20-year-old boy on the third day out, the ship taking a 48-degree roll on the 11th day, and losing 39 head of our herd due to sickness that somehow was not treated. In spite of these very unfortunate occurrences, we did arrive safely and ours was a mission of help to very needy families devastated by the war.

Byron E. Dell
Trotwood, Ohio

From the On Earth Peace Assembly

Program Coordinator/ Development Associate

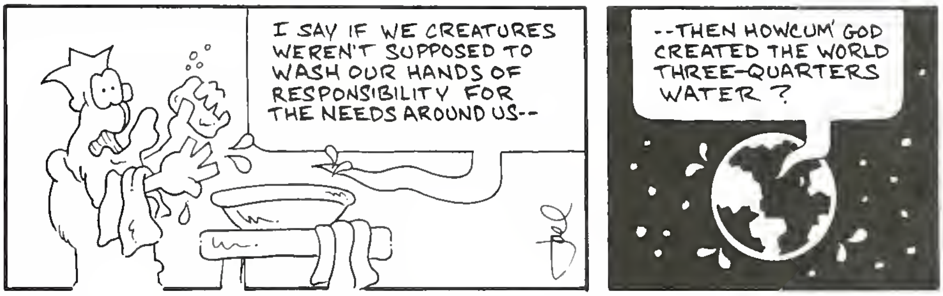
Church of the Brethren peace education organization located at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., is seeking a full-time Program Coordinator/Development Associate to begin work on Sept. 1, 1998. Responsibilities include carrying out OEPA's Peace Academy, Conflict Resolution Teams, Summer Peace Camp, Winter Inter-Term, and other peace education programs, as well as assisting with ongoing fund raising efforts.

Requirements
Bachelor's degree required. Some theological and program management experience preferred. Experience with computers, conflict resolution, mediation, and acceptance of the scriptural basis of biblical peacemaking strongly preferred.

Letters of application, résumé, and three references must be sent by March 31 to: Tom Hurst, OEPA, PO Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776-0188.

Pontius' Puddle

Send payment for reprinting "Pontius' Puddle" from Messenger *to Joel Kauffmann, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN 46526. $25 for one time use. $10 for second strip in same issue. $10 for congregations.*


I SAY IF WE CREATURES WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO WASH OUR HANDS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE NEEDS AROUND US--
--THEN HOWCUM' GOD CREATED THE WORLD THREE-QUARTERS WATER ?
Joel Kauffmann

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TRAVEL

Cruise the waterways of Russia from Moscow to St. Petersburg. The tour (14 days) leaves Washington, D.C. (Dulles Intnl. Airport) on Sept. 4, 1998. An attractive price is available. For details contact the tour host, Dr. Wayne F. Geisert, President Emeritus, Box 40, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, VA 22812. Phone (540) 433-1433, or (540) 828-5494.

Travel with a Mission in Understanding People to People International delegation visiting Iceland and Greenland, Aug. 30 to Sept. 9, 1998. For info., contact delegation leader Enos B. Heisey, Member Board of Trustees, People to People International, 157 Stone Hedge Ct., Lebanon, PA 17042-78076. Tel. (717) 273-3093.

Travel with a purpose. Missionary journeys of St. Paul, Turkey, & Greece, Mar. 19–Apr. 3, 1998. $2,899. For info, write Wendell & Joan Bohrer, 8520 Royal Meadow Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46217. Tel./fax (317) 882-5067. Or write Paul & Geneva White, 3310 Melody Ave. SW, Roanoke, VA 24018-3114. Tel. (540) 776-3289.

Cruise the Russian waterways, Aug. 7–23, 1998. From $2,649, depending on deck level. Visit Moscow, Red Square, Kremlin, St. Petersburg, & cruise rivers of the czars, on 1st-class cruise ship. 3 meals a day. For info, write Bohrer Tours, 8520 Royal Meadow Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46217. Tel./fax (317) 882-5067.

INVITATION

Cincinnati Church of the Brethren fellowship meets for worship & support in n.e. area of Cincinnati. We welcome others to join us or bring needs to our attention. Contact us c/o Cincinnati Friends Meeting House, 8075 Keller Rd., Indian Hill, OH 45243. Tel. (513) 956-7733.

Come worship in the Valley of the Sun with Community Church of the Brethren at 111 N. Sunvalley Blvd., Mesa, AZ 86207. Mail to: 8343 E. Emelita Ave., Mesa, AZ 85208. Tel. (602) 357-9811.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Community mediation and training center in northeast Indiana seeking Director of Development to coordinate fund-raising and organizational development. Will work with membership, donors, grant proposals and generating income from the program services. Requires commitment to community peacemaking and empowerment, ability to work collaboratively, and demonstrated fund-raising ability. Salary $25,000-$30,000 + benefits. Application deadline April 15, 1998. For more info. contact: Education for Conflict Resolution, Inc., P.O. Box 275, North Manchester, IN 46962. Tel. (219) 982-4621. E-mail: <bgross@igc.org>.

DIABETICS SERVICE

Diabetics: If you have Medicare or insurance, you could be eligible to receive your diabetic supplies at no cost. (Insulin-dependent only.) Call (800) 337-4144.

Turning Points

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation.

Annville, Pa.: Steve and Mary Schiavoni

Antelope Valley, Billings, Okla.: Justin Heinrich, Gaylon Silvey, Kathy Jo Silvey, Tammy Brown, Darryl Brown, Rick Reaves, Pam Reaves, Daron Sharp, Sherri Sharp, Kay Ranney, Scott Ranney, Doug Ranney, Greg O'Laughlin, Kurt Vincent, Sue Williams, Katlin Harris, Micah Buzzard, Alexia Williams

Ashland First, Ashland, Ohio: Jordan Bowersook, Luke Cawood, Tyler Houston

Beaverton, Mich.: Threse Coats

Bella Vista, Los Angeles, Calif.: Celine Flores, Aaron Sainz, Henry Cervantes, Mark Aldana, Eileen Flores

Boise Valley, Meridan, Idaho: Margie Lacy

Bridgewater, Va.: George Mason, David and Mabel Flora, Mary Rinker, Jeremy Koster, Margaret Spitzer, Phillip and Barbara Kirakofe, R.V. and Juanita Simmons

Bush Creek, Monrovia, Md.: James Cliber, Betty Auton, Dortha Cunningham, William Ziegler, Linda Ziegler, Jodie Flook, Jill Harris, Denise Gobbett, Crystal Phelps, Keith Phelps, Jesse Boggs, Erin Boggs, Bruce Elliott, Greg Stoner, Megan Burke, Edward Smith, Patricia Smith

Carlisle, Pa.: Mary Graybill, Dennis Nickel, Blair Walker, Sara Vanasdalen

Chiques, Manheim, Pa.: Leah Hughes, Ashley Swope, Audrey Myer, Derek Weaver, Steven Myer, Randi Myer, Paul Shaffer, Liz Shaffer, Norman Yeater, Heather Yeater

Christ the Servant, Cape Coral, Fla.: Robert and Mildred Tingle, Steve and Debra Del Vecchio

Clover Creek, Martinsburg, Pa.:Valerie Acker, Betty Ayers, Larry Ayers, Amber Baker, Ashley Baker, Jennifer Bechtel, Chris Cunningham, Joe Cunningham, Mark Dilling, Kathy Karns, Kristy Karns, Leroy Karns, Beverly Ruhlman, John Baird, D. Bradley Krehl, Kendell Krehl, Elliot Krehl, Gail Weitzel

Dixon, Ill.: George Munnich, Pamela Munnich, William Farwell

Dupont, Ohio: Ryan Geckle

First Church, Reading, Pa.: Meg Gault, Candace Kaucher

Florin, Mount Joy, Pa.: Nathaniel Baum, Jeffrey Dombach, Matt Nissley, Jill Hershey, Tara Summy, Megan Kline, Sarah Pepper, Glenn Wittle, Barb Wittle

Germantown Brick, Rocky Mount, Va.: Susan Flora, Brandon Page, April Anderson, Justin Grubb, Karen Quinn Barnhart, Bill Corn, Angela Corn, Jack Brammer, Ron Cawley, Arlene Brammer

Green Hill, Salem, Va.: David Cossaboon, Betsy Cossaboon, Ruby Schaal, Hope Shively, Samantha Shively

Hartville, Ohio: Eric Poe, Debbie Poe, Kerensa Dash

Live Oak, Calif.: Renate Hakenson, Jean Weeks

Lower Deer Creek, Camden, Ind.: Jay and Elaine Lansinger

Maple Spring, Hollsopple, Pa.: Andrew Baraniak, Julia Cable, Jonathan Dunmyer, Edward Fisher, Michael Graham, Jamie Harvey, David Koba, Megan McDonald, Jennifer Rummel, Kirby Shaffer, Lucas Shaffer, Jeff and Kim Thomas, Fern Yarnick

Memorial, Martinsburg, Pa.: Ernest Leckrone, Ida Leckrone, Pauline Keagle, Jason Peterman

Middle Creek, Lititz, Pa.: Lisa Bollinger, Jorden Wenger

Middlebury, Ind.: Angie Bruens, Levi Mellinger, Chris Neeley, Julie Swinehart, Rebecca Tallman

Midland, Va.: Leonard, Doug and Judy

Milledgeville, Ill.: Joe Leddy, Kelly Leddy

Mohrsville, Pa.: Dolores Hatt, Grant Hatt, Nathan Bauer, Sara Bealer, Kristen Gross, Jennifer Lenz, Matthew Lenz, Cathryn Levan, Obi Nwoke, Pamela Werley, James Kidon, April Ullman

Monte Vista, Callaway, Va.: Kenneth and Shirley Beckner, Eldridge Altice

New Carlisle, Ohio: Helen Freese, Virginia Jenkins, Rachel Peterson, Brent Taynor, Janice Taynor

Pomona Fellowship, Pomona, Calif.: Carl Cook, Paul Sparks, Laura and Jennette Lovelace

Poplar Ridge, Defiance, Ohio:Paul and Carol Brown, Desirae and Amber Armstrong, Dawn Lewis

Pyrmont, Delphi, Ind.: Betty Fingerle, Ron Younker, Joseph Hemersback, Nancy Hemersbach, Darrin Disinger, Tami Disinger, Travis Hatfield

Quakertown, Pa.: Lisa and Joseph Armstrong

Ross, Mendon, Ohio: Peter Calvert, Ann Esmond, Dennis Knepper

Sebring, Fla.: Baldomero Miranda

Somerset, Pa.: Alan Keyser, Jr., Samuel I. Phillip, Connie Phillip, Samuel A. Phillip, Carissa Phillip, Kyle Mosholder, Edna Durbin, Russel Friedline

St. Joseph, Mo.: Mary Jonke, Jerod Kobzej, Harry Brissett

St. Petersburg, Fla.: Fred and Alba Putnam, Fred and Dorothy Harrison, Brinda Spearman, Roger and Junita Williams, Paul Claypool, Cassey Lerch, Marion Belton, Dorothy Crocker, Jennie Good, Jimmie Good, Bill and Marian Goodwin, Myrtle Guy, Jennie Hambrick, Marie Lewis, Walter and Ann Witmer

Sugar Ridge, Custer, Mich.: Richard Coleman, Dawn Coleman, Carol Gibbs

Waynesboro, Pa.: Jennifer Angle, Rebecca Angle, Krystal Stremmel, Jenniser Simmers

West Charleston, Tipp City, Ohio: Verna Sergio

White Oak, Penryn, Pa.: Kiah Wenger, Kirson Wenger, Jeanette Stoner, Carl Martin, Shirley Martin, Stella Martin, Charmaine Martin, Maria Santiago

Wiley, Colo.: Kima Rayleen Miller, Jadelle Adrianne Thomas, Jarrod Dean Sperra, Helen Colvin, Anne Oxley, Rod and Julie Thomas

Wedding Anniversaries

Alexander, Charles and Maxine, Warsaw, Ind., 55

Ballou, John and Margaret, Roanoke, Va., 50

Baughman, Doris and George, Chambersburg, Pa., 50

Beck, James and Ethel, Denver, Pa., 56

Best, Sheldon and Genevieve, Rockford, Ill., 60

Cave, Wilmer and Mary, Grantville, Pa., 55

Creech, Harvey and Mary, Tipp City, Ohio, 60

De Seelhorst, Earl and Dorothy, Modesto, Calif., 60

Demuth, Doris and Bill, Chambersburg, Pa., 50

DuBois, Eldon and Virginia, Modesto, Calif., 60

Eichelberger, Ura and Eugene, Chambersburg, Pa., 50

Erwin, Floyd and Isabel, Modesto, Calif., 60

Fawley, Gerald and Ethel, Churchville, Va., 55

Feather, Eugene and Gladys, Martinsburg, Pa., 50

Flory, Ronald and Norva, Rockford, Ill., 50

Frey, Agnes and Elwood, Chambersburg, Pa., 50

George, Dale and Verna, Carlisle, Pa., 50

Gerdes, Robert and Mary Lea, Rockford, Ill., 50

Hawbaker, Charlotte and Harold, Chambersburg, Pa., 50

Heiks, Forest and Arlene, Ashland, Ohio, 50

Holsinger, Glenn and Virginia, Martinsburg, Pa., 50

Howes, Gene and Geraldine, Copemish, Mich., 60

Keim, Bob and Sybil, Tucson, Ariz., 50

Kurtz, Willis and Hazel, Hartville, Ohio, 55

Landis, Virginia and Menno, Chambersburg, Pa., 50

Lavy, Daniel and Wilma, Uniontown, Ohio, 50

Leckrone, Sam and Lucy, Copemish, Mich., 60

Lerch, Clifford and Pauline, Quakertown, Pa., 50

Longnecker, Dale and Maxine, Rockford, Ill., 50

McLucas, Doris and Lloyd, Chambersburg, Pa., 50

Miller, Fred and Virginia, Bridgewater, Va., 50

Miller, Wayne and Gwen, Santa Cruz, Calif., 50

Moore, Genevieve and Arthur, Nampa, Idaho, 71

Myers, Pam and John, Chambersburg, Pa., 50

Newcomer, John and Helen, Rockford, Ill., 50

Price, Bob and Ethel, Carlisle, Pa., 55

Regan, Edward and Ardath, Scottville, Mich., 50

Ringer, Virgil and Cora, Alliance, Ohio, 50

Ritter, Harry and Leah, Akron, Pa., 55

Rogers, Howard and Enid, Wakarusa, Ind., 65

Schmidt, Eugene and Faye, Swanton, Md., 50

Schumacher, Bill and Bernice, Hartville, Ohio, 55

Shock, Lawrence, and Helen, Defiance, Ohio, 60

Simpson, Glen and Reba, Mt. Lake Park, Md., 50

Slifer, Sam and Edith, Quakertown, Pa., 65

Smith, Delbert and Barbara, Newton, Kan., 50

Speas, Joseph and Marguerite, Bridgewater, Va., 60

Stump, Roberta and Ludema, Goshen, Ind., 55

Switzer, Fred and Neva, Waterford, Calif., 50

Thompson, Kenneth and Charleen, Freeport, Mich., 50

Wayne, Edward and Bernice, West Reading, Pa., 55

Whitmore, Harry and Geneva, Bridgewater, Va., 60

Williams, Harry and Bev, Copemish, Mich.

Wise, Herbert and Mary, Hartville, Ohio, 55

Wong, Seek and Sue, Rockford, Ill., 50

Zitta, Tony and Irene, Quakertown, Pa., 55

Licensings

Beeghly, Randall, Mar. 15, 1997, Community, W. Plains

Copenhaver, Ronald L., July 26, 1997, White Oak, Atl. NE

Coursen, Robert, Aug. 28,

1997, Happy Corner, S. Ohio
Croushorn, Luke A., Nov. 8, 1997, Nokesville, Mid-Atl.
Davis. Barbra, Nov. 8, 1997, Ankeny, N. Plains
Gilbert, Dena, May 3, 1997, LaVerne, Pac. SW.
Huffaker. Michael. July 24, 1997, Trotwood, S. Ohio
Heck. Dewayne, Dec. 17, 1996, Potsdam, S. Ohio
Hornbaker, Judson, Mar. 15, 1997, Community, W. Plains
Knotts, Kenneth Dale, Nov. 10, 1997, Circle of Love Fellowship, W. Marva
Myer, Dennis J., Nov. 15, 1996, Lewiston, Atl. NE.
Nalley, Mischelle R., Aug. 12, 1996, Meyersdale, W. Pa.
Powers, James, July 26, 1997, Osceola, Mo./Ark.
Pugh, Edward J., Aug. 28, 1997, Lower Miami, S. Ohio
Pyles, Tyowen Robert, August 21, 1997, West Charleston, S. Ohio
Rhodes, Rebecca Oliver, Sept. 6, 1997, Roanoke, Central, Virlina
Schmidt, James R., Jan. 1, 1995, Mountain View, Idaho
Starkey, Patrick O., Sept. 6, 1997, Summerdean, Virlina
Weber, Thomas M., Oct. 7, 1997, West Green Tree, Atl. NE
Williams, Edward Thomas, Nov. 8, 1997, Midland, Mid-Atl.
Yost, Eric W., Aug. 29, 1997, Windber, W. Pa.

Ordinations

Cox, Mary Margaret, Nov. 15, 1997, Petersburg, Memorial, W. Marva.
Emmons, Anthony E., Dec. 6. 1997, Roanoke, Oak Grove, Virlina
Hess, Nancy H., May 31, 1997, Palmyra, Atl. NE.
Houghton, James E., Sept. 13, 1997, Moxham, W. Pa.
Hostetter, Rick E., Oct. 10, 1997, Brandts, S. Pa.
Kessler, Kevin, Apr. 19, 1997, Canton, Ill./Wis.
LaRue, Robin, 1994, Yellow Creek, N. Ind.
Pfeiffer, Carol M., Oct. 25, 1997, Salem, S. Ohio
Powers, Walter Jr., Sept. 13, 1997, County Line, N. Ohio

Deaths

Barnhart, Merton, 89, Rocky Mount, Va., March 17, 1997
Bateman, Annie M., 91, Hartville, Ohio, May 19
Baugh, Betty, 77, Uniontown, Pa., Oct. 6
Beach, David, 70, Woodbury, Pa., Sept. 7
Bechdolt, Paul E., 77, Camden, Ind., Nov. 21
Becker, Lois, 55. Lititz, Pa., Sept. 21
Becker, Lucille, 82, Mesa, Ariz., Oct. 13
Belts, Lillian, 87, Nampa, Idaho, Feb. 27, 1997
Boitnott, Nell Kersh, 96, Bridgewater, Va., Nov. 18
Brandt, Renee, 43, Manheim, Pa., Nov. 25
Brannan, Mary, 74, Decatur, Ill., Nov. 28
Brashear, George, Bush Creek CoB, Monrovia, Md., Jan. 1, 1997
Brown, Inez, 85, Urbana. Ill., Nov. 16
Brumbaugh, Lloyd, 84, Sebring, Fla., Dec. 5
Bucher, Minnie, 87, Palmyra, Pa., Nov. 22
Burket, Wilson E., 93, Martinsburg, Pa., Nov. 23
Claar, Bruce, 82, Roaring Spring, Pa., July 10
Clapper, Rawleigh L., 78, Martinsburg, Pa., Nov. 14
Clapper, Terry L., 61, Martinsburg, Pa., July 14
Clouser, M. Helen, 95, York, Pa., Oct. 25
Cordier, Faye, 81, Mogodore, Ohio, June 29
Craig, Arline, 99, Palm Harbor, Fla., Nov. 20
Creason, Faye, 82, Nampa, Idaho, July 1, 1997
Dart, Alta, 84, Imperial, Neb.
Dolby, Dewaine, 88, Huntington, Ind., Sept. 12
Drake, Wayne, 90. Martinsburg, Pa., Nov. 23
Dunn, James (Joe) Jr., 20, Nappanee, Ind., Nov. 17
Eikenberry, Terrill, 47, Bangkok, Thailand, Jan. 10
Embrey, Ethel, Bush Creek CoB. Monrovia, Md., Jan. 10, 1997
Endsley, Ida Mae, 76, Huntington, Ind., Sept. 14
Etter, Mae, 96, Ottawa, Ohio, Nov., 1997
Farwell, William, Dixon. Ill., Nov. 15
Fisher, Amanda, 82, Ridgely, Md., Nov. 13
Flora, Alvin, 76, Rocky Mount, Va., Jan. 15, 1997
Flora, Daniel J., 97, Boones Mill, Va., Oct. 31
Flora, Essie, 90, Rocky Mount, Va., Nov. 16, 1996
Flora, Lucille, 91, Tipp City, Ohio, Dec. 7
Flory, Abram, 100, Manheim, Pa., Aug. 6
Foltz, Nancy Rhodes, 70, Bridgewater, Va., Nov. 2
Frailey, Glenn, 87, Shelocta, Pa., Nov. 15
Furrow, Anna, 60, Callaway, Va., June 23
Glotfelty, Roger P. Sr., 60, Oakland, Md., Dec. 11
Gochenour, Isabelle, 88, Annville, Pa., Oct. 24
Graber, Glenn J., 73, Hartville, Ohio, May 13
Groff, Esther, 86, Lititz, Pa., Sept. 6
Guise, Mary R., 74, Gardners, Pa., Sept. 24
Haldeman, Clarence, 79, Chambersburg, Pa., Sept. 2
Hamilton, Harry. 79, Woodbury, Pa., Aug. 6
Hampton, Chalmer, 85, Bloomfield, Mo., Nov. 4
Hawkins, Mrs. Reddy Fagg, 64. Pulaski. Va., Sept. 8
Heinzman, Meredith, 78, Arcadia, Ind., Sept. 25
Herbold, Lavern W., 82, Kingsley, Iowa, Oct. 10
Hershey, Bruce, 77, Manheim, Pa., July 22
Hixson, Dale, 80, Quakertown, Pa., June 5, 1996
Hollenbaugh, Phyllis J., 62, Union Bridge, Md., Nov. 20
Holsinger, Charles, 79, Sebring, Fla., Nov. 21
Hoover, Benjamin E., 71, Bridgewater, Va., Dec. 3
Irwin, Elizabeth, 77, Frankfort, Ind., Oct. 23
Jacobs, Maude, 93, Quincy, Pa., Nov. 14
Jacobs, Paul A., 92, New Oxford, Pa., Oct. 28
Johnson, Ruth, 86, Nappanee, Ind., Oct. 19
Kensinger, Arthur, 79, Woodbury, Pa., Oct. 17
Kimmel, Edwin B., 77, Shelocta, Pa., Nov. 15
Kindy, Wayne, 80, Goshen, Ind., July 25
King, Grace, 64, Woodbury, Pa., Oct. 3
Kurtz, Samuel G., 86, Lebanon. Pa., Oct. 3
Lasley, Bernice, 80, Branch, Mich., July 24
Laughman, Charles A., 88, Hanover, Pa., Nov. 1
Lease, Edith, Bush Creek CoB, Monrovia, Md., May 11
Leffue, J. Parker, 92, Rocky Mount, Va., June 21
Leland, William, 76, Oceanside, Calif., May 7
Longcor, Florence, 99, Rockford, Ill., August 16
Longenecker, Edith, 96, Oct. 10
McCall, Ray Kyle, 85, Wiley, Co., May 21
McCauley, Malcolm, 69, North Garden, Va., Sept. 23
McCluney, Martha, 89, Warrensburg, Mo., Oct. 16
McGill, Dorothy Yaple, 82, Pentwater, Mich., Sept. 27
Michael, Richard Thomas, 62, Bridgewater, Va., Oct. 30
Miller, Kenneth, 68, Wakarusa, Ind., May 17, 1997
Mixell, Mary E., 87, Carlisle, Pa., May 19
Morrow, Frederick E. Sr., 82, Midland, Tex., Nov. 6
Morton, Gerald, Warrensburg, Mo., Jan. 19, 1997
Myers, Roy, 97, Canton, Ohio, Nov. 4
Myers, Ruth A., 81, Biglerville, Pa., July 13
Oyler, Ursel Ellen, 84, Flora, Ind., Nov. 20
Page, Howard, 88, Kingsley, Iowa, Oct. 10
Parker, Delmar, 86, Beaverton, Mich., Nov. 19
Replogle, Samuel, 86, Camp Hill, Pa., July 26
Replogle, Thelma, 84, Camp Hill, Pa., Aug. 8
Ritchey, Marjorie L.. 62, Martinsburg, Pa., May 13, 1997
Roderick, Harry Wilson, Bush Creek CoB, Monrovia, Md., Mar. 22, 1997
Roush, Pearl, 80, North Liberty, Ind., Dec. 16
Royer, Hannan, 96, Lebanon, Pa., Nov. 2
Rudy, Lizzie, 96, Ephrata, Pa., Nov. 30
Rummel, Arthur Leon, 99, Escondido, Calif., June 7
Rupel, Milan, 62, La Verne, Calif., Oct. 9
Schultz, Corrine F., Dixon, Ill., Dec. 11
Scott, Ray, 43, Upland, Calif., Dec. 10
Seitsinger, Earl R., 83, South English, Iowa, Oct. 10
Sellers, Estella, 99, Bourbon, Ind., Nov. 25
Shaffer, Linden, 74, Denton, Md., Oct. 8
Shank, Ethel S., 84, Martinsburg. Pa., Aug. 19
Sharrer, Dorothea, 89, Quakertown, Pa., Sept. 8, 1996
Shull, Evaleen, 77, Bridgewater, Va., Oct. 5
Sigler. Lona. 99, Huntington, Ind., Sept. 7
Sisk, Virgil, 77, Sebring, Fla., Dec. 19
Slusher, Claude, 95, Bridgewater, Va., Nov. 29
Smith, Frederick R. Sr., 78, Martinsburg, W. Va., Oct. 21
Smith, Thurman, 64, West Salem. Ohio, Sept. 8
Spence. Beulah, Rocky Mount, Va., Dec. 29, 1996
Spitzer, Delores, 65. Kalona, Iowa., Dec. 8
Stealy, Romaine, 86, Goshen, Ind., Nov. 12
Sterling, Linda L., 51, Indianapolis, Ind., Oct. 3
Stine, Norma J., 78. York, Pa., Nov. 13
Studebaker, Gerald L., 84, New Carlisle, Ohio, Dec. 7
Stutsman, Mary K.. 68, Goshen, Ind., Oct. 8
Stutzman, Clyde W., 69, Martinsburg, Pa., May 24, 1997
Swartz, Julie Hoover, 42, Fairfield, Pa., Nov. 20
Thoman, Delores M., 68, East Berlin, Pa., Nov. 16
Thornton, Mazie, 84, Lebanon, Pa., Nov. 17
Tomlonson, Judith Carole Schroeder, 58, Warrensburg, Mo., Dec. 3
Tomlonson, Judith Schroeder, 58, Warrensburg, Mo., Dec. 3
Townsend, Franklin Otto, 77, Lake Odessa, Mich., Oct. 29
Ulrich, D. L. , 74, Huntington, Ind., Oct. 1
Walker, Paul, 89, N. Manchester, Ind., June 24
Webb, Nellie, Mt. Crawford, Va., Oct. 23
Williams, Roger, St. Petersburg, Fla., May 4, 1997
Williams, Sandra, 55, Defiance, Ohio, April 14, 1997
Winegard, Katherine, 77, Grottoes, Va., Nov. 18
Witter, Harry M., 83, Chambersburg, Pa., Nov. 2
Wittle, Barb, 47, Mount Joy, Pa., Sept. 27
Woody, John, Billings, Okla., Dec. 4, 1997
Younkins, Mary, 80, Sebring, Fla., Dec. 7

Editorial

Spirituality lite

I know angels are big these days, and I had been intending to watch all the new TV shows about church and religion. So I knew vaguely that spirituality had become trendy when I saw *Self* magazine's "special inspirational issue" with the big cover headline: "Your Spiritual Life" next to the fresh face of a model wearing (I learn on the contents page) Flawless Finish Dual Perfection Makeup in Cream by Elizabeth Arden.

I bought it.

Turning to page 132 where the special section began, I smugly looked for the magazine's version of spirituality lite. The first article was a reader survey titled, "How spiritual are you?" Of the 2,100 respondents, 70 percent said they consider themselves spiritual, and another 27 percent said they are "somewhat" spiritual. Some 79 percent said they were raised practicing an organized religion, but only 47 percent practice that religion today. Why did the others lapse? Because the religion was "too rigid," or didn't treat women equally, or encouraged "group think," or "was more interested in my wallet than my soul." Hmmm. This could be interesting and useful to church people.

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The church has what Self *readers want—something real and authentic, calling for deep commitment and changed lives.*

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Some 85 percent of the survey respondents own a Bible, though few read it. And the most popular choice for a motto to live by was "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Or, as one reader explained, "What goes around comes around."

I found myself starting to like my *Self*. Its readers sound like many good uncommitted people I know.

Another article warns against New Age spirituality: "One of the deepest and most attractive flaws of the New Age is its extraordinary emphasis on self-absorption. Devotees often refer to unconditional love for all humanity but rarely do they mention an obligation to demonstrate it to actual neighbors."

And a third article, "What Exactly is Buddhism, and Why Is It So Hip Now?" explained the star appeal that has led Richard Gere, Phil Jackson, Tina Turner, and Natalie Merchant to try it. A psychiatrist is quoted: "The fact that so many rich and famous people are still searching suggests that all the things this culture sets up as desirable don't make us happy." Another doctor adds: "We're the most materialistic country on Earth, but we're no longer intoxicated by having three cars and four television sets. There's a deep inner yearning for something real, something authentic."

Does the church have what all these people want? Of course. But we often don't make it easy for outsiders to get in. And the message about Jesus is hard to explain precisely. All the meanness and hypocrisy of the church in history gets in the way. But if we in the church realize there are a lot of hungry people out there wanting what we have, maybe we'll open the doors a little wider to let them in.

In various ways, most people in the *Self* survey said what they want most is love and acceptance. Their greatest fears are loneliness, failure, pain, and death. Their needs can be met by a loving church family and a loving God who says, "I have come so that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

What many people want these days besides love are good examples of how to live. They want exciting not boring, different not the same, alternative not mainstream. People are looking for "another way of living," and a way that works. Alfred North Whitehead, the early twentieth-century British philosopher, had it right when he said, "Without the hope of high adventure, religion deteriorates into a mere appendage of a comfortable life." High adventure is what people want from religion. Seeing others take risks for Jesus is attractive. Watching Christians walk away from the materialistic culture has appeal. The courage of Christians witnessing for peace makes seekers take notice. The hard work of service is what many people want for themselves.

The church has what *Self* readers want—something real and authentic, calling for deep commitment and changed lives. We should write to the magazine and invite them. If *Self* gets religion, I wonder, will it change its name to *Others*?—FLETCHER FARRAR

Making Our Mark

Brethren Witness

Michael Hoffmaster, Martinsburg, W. Va., at workcamp in Honduras

Brethren have always been prepared to witness to their faith—by not going to war, by living responsibly with God's creation, by reaching out to those in need, by speaking the truth to power. At no time has making our witness been more urgent than it is today, amidst wars and preparation for war, a growing global gap between the rich and the poor, and widespread destruction of God's earth. The office of Brethren Witness seeks to equip members, congregations and districts to faithfully and creatively express their witness —for the glory of God and our neighbor's good.

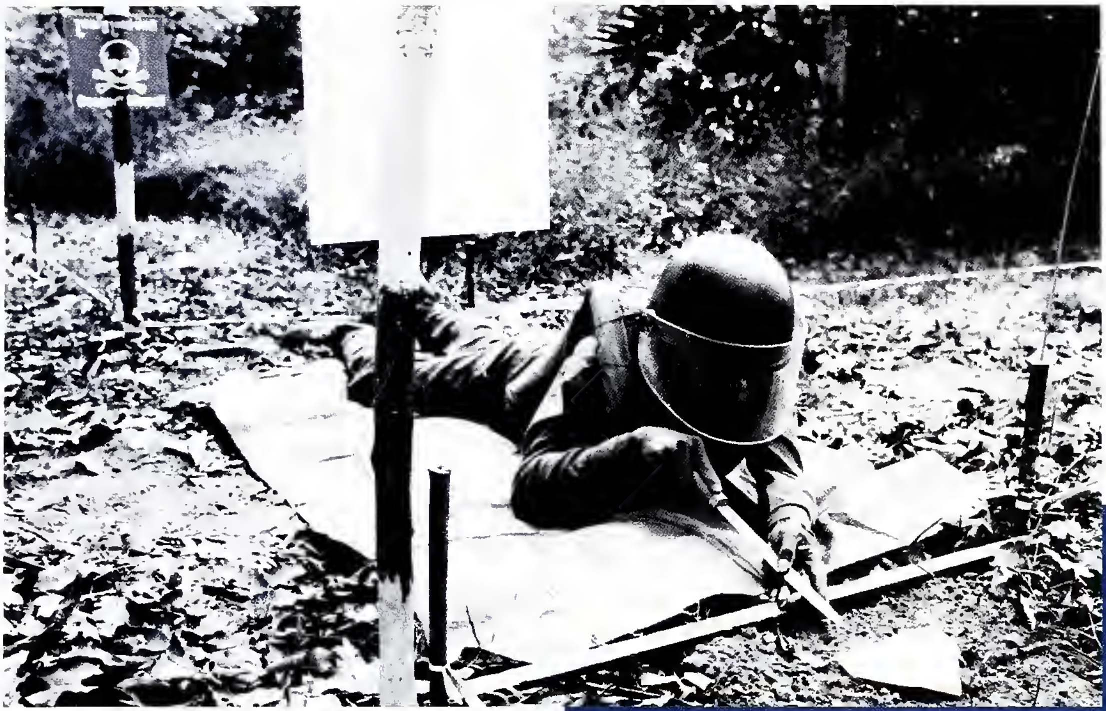
Peace and Justice *Take the Pledge!* peace commitment campaign • Workcamps/Learning Tours/Peace Delegations • Study Resources • District Peace Coordinator Network • Global Women's Project • Peace-related plays and worship resources *People of God's Peace* newsletter • Accompaniment Projects • Witness to Washington

Care for Creation *The Third Day* newsletter • BVS projects • Special congregational initiatives

Hunger Action Lenten bulletin inserts • Two Cents a Meal campaign • "Seeds of Hope" children's hunger emphasis kit • Youth hunger action materials

Go ahead, make your mark!

For information or to request congregational visits or youth event leadership, contact: Office of Brethren Witness • David Radcliff, director • Church of the Brethren General Board • 800-323-8039



Every difference makes a difference.

Inch by inch, one square meter at a time, a deminer clears land studded with anti-personnel mines. The task has barely begun, given some 115 million land mines poised ready to strike at life or limb in 60 countries.

In Cambodia, where land mines are equal to the number of inhabitants, teams of deminers are trained and supported by Church World Service. Their work, funded by gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing, enables refugees to move back to home villages, farmers to plant fields and raise livestock, and children to play securely out-of-doors.

In freeing the land of terror and in rebuilding communities, every difference makes a difference.

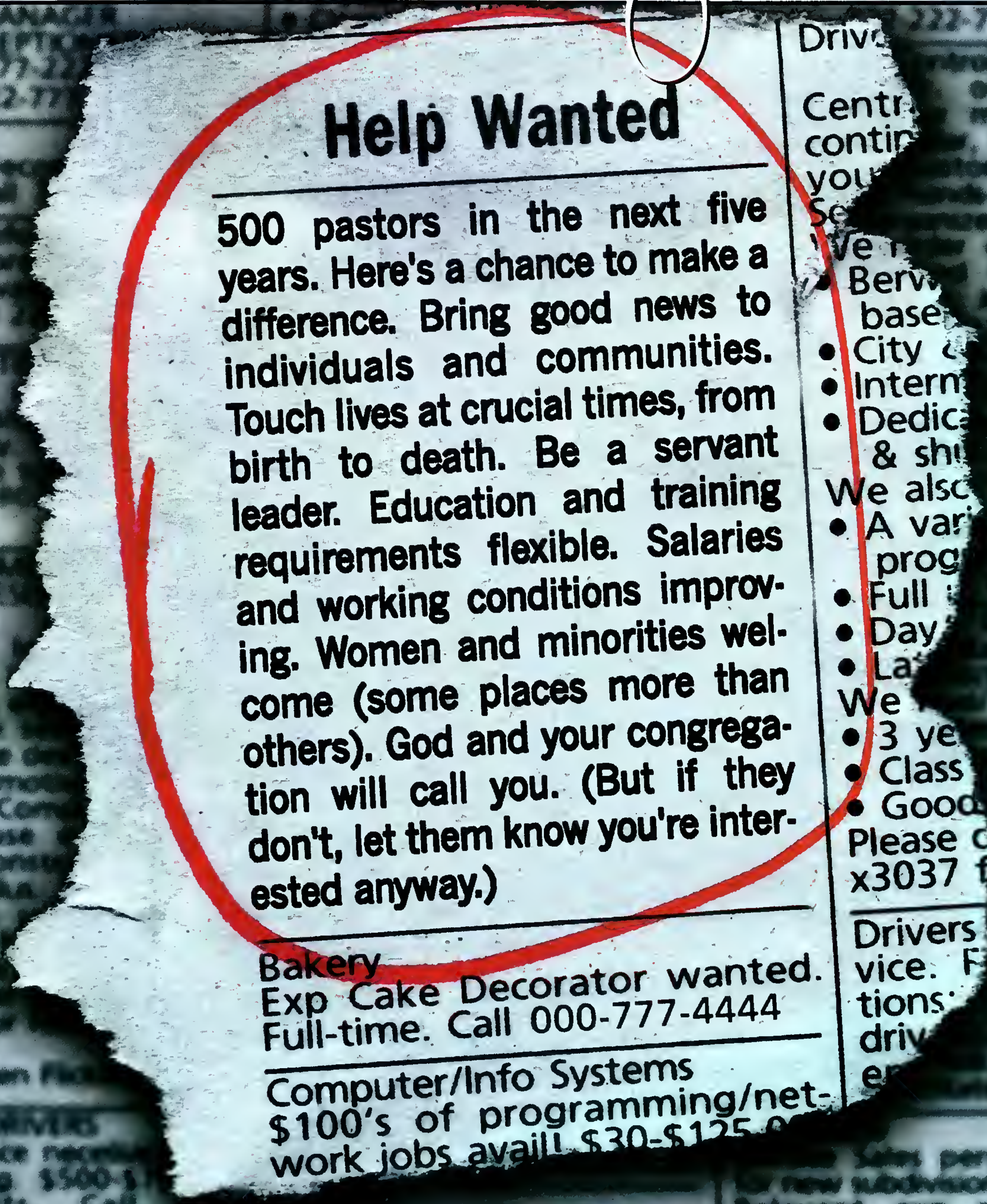
And not only in Cambodia, but in 70 other countries where One Great Hour of Sharing helps feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, heal the broken, and transform lives.

Listen and respond to your neighbors' cries. Hold the earth's people in God's loving embrace. Give help. Give hope. Give life. Give to One Great Hour of Sharing.

Church of the Brethren General Board
1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120

Church of the Brethren April 1998

Messenger



Help Wanted

500 pastors in the next five years. Here's a chance to make a difference. Bring good news to individuals and communities. Touch lives at crucial times, from birth to death. Be a servant leader. Education and training requirements flexible. Salaries and working conditions improving. Women and minorities welcome (some places more than others). God and your congregation will call you. (But if they don't, let them know you're interested anyway.)

Bakery
Exp Cake Decorator wanted. Full-time. Call 000-777-4444

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Living the Story

BVSer Annette Hyder, Saint Francis House, Oxford, England. Jeff Leard photo.

Celebrating 50 years of Brethren Volunteer Service

The Good News, the story of Jesus, is to be proclaimed and celebrated. In words, yes, but also in the wordless words of love: feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, healing the sick, consoling the lonely, bringing together the estranged, working for peace and justice.

To tell the story by living the story: that's what 50 years of Brethren Volunteer Service and 5,376 volunteers and 420 projects in 40 countries are all about. God's call to reconciliation is a ministry that never ends.

In your support of Brethren Volunteer Service, you help make Jesus' love visible.

Telling the story. Living the story.

BVS
50
years
1948–1998

Messenger

Vol. 147, No. 3 April 1998

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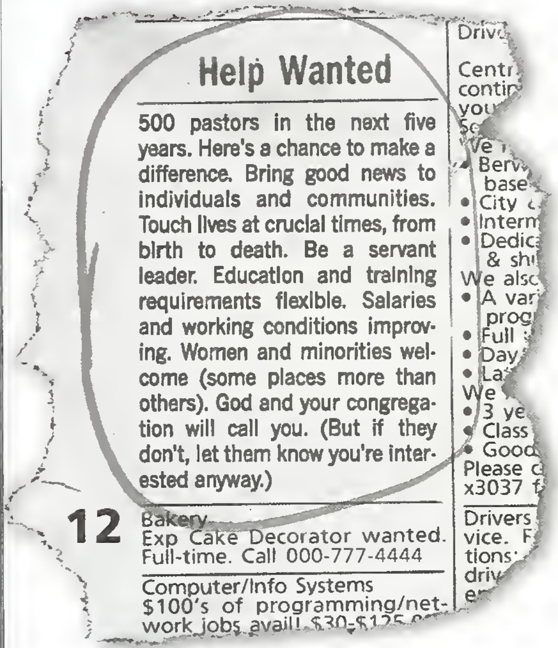

Help Wanted

500 pastors in the next five years. Here's a chance to make a difference. Bring good news to individuals and communities. Touch lives at crucial times, from birth to death. Be a servant leader. Education and training requirements flexible. Salaries and working conditions improving. Women and minorities welcome (some places more than others). God and your congregation will call you. (But if they don't, let them know you're interested anyway.)

Bakery
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$100's of programming/network jobs avail!

On the cover: Cover design by Paul Stocksdale, a talented graphic artist who has designed MESSENGER pages for the past five years. This is his final edition as designer. Thanks, Paul.

Features

12 Wanted: A new heart for ministry

The ministry office of the General Board wants 500 people to be called and trained as ministers in the next five years. Educational opportunities are available through Bethany Seminary and the Brethren Academy. And obstacles to entering the ministry are being addressed. But the greatest need is for congregations to revive the old-fashioned practice of calling out their own members into leadership!

16 Living with dying

When Dale Aukerman, noted Brethren writer and peace advocate, learned in 1996 he had lung cancer and not much longer to live, he began a new phase of his life—more intent and intentional. In an article timed for Easter, he shares fresh insights from his experience, and reflects on the new life he has gained by preparing for his own death.

20 Family reunion in Di Linh

When Manchester and La Verne college students traveled to Vietnam in January, a new generation of young adults sought understanding of a troubled era in American history. Some made connections there with courageous family members. Joel Ulrich had a "reunion" with distant cousin Ted Studebaker, and Madalyn Metzger found where her parents met.

24 Puerto Rico blessings

Sixteen Brethren went to Puerto Rico in January to give gifts of work to church partners there. From that experience they brought back many gifts and blessings.

Phil Grout

vin Dulabaum

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From the Publisher

One of the items still on my to-do list is "Christmas letter." I never got it done, but I haven't quite given up on the possibility.

I've never gotten my Christmas letters sent before Christmas anyway, so it was no big deal when it carried over to my January list. One year I sent a Groundhog Day letter, so I was willing to carry this year's over to February. For a while I thought it would be charming to make it a Valentine letter. And now—well, I've not yet been captured by the idea of an Easter letter.

But unlike a Christmas letter, which can be postponed forever, the to-do list of our subscriptions processor, Vicki Roche, simply snowballs. Address changes and invoices can't be postponed for long. Whatever doesn't get done one month, returns the next month with a vengeance.

The staffing reductions last summer left us short-handed in many areas, including this one. Vicki—who handles other related tasks as well, including bookkeeping, mail and phone coverage, and some promotion work—makes sure the critical functions get covered first and then follows with all the others. For example, it's more important for new subscribers to get the next issue than for lapsed subscribers to stop receiving it, regardless of the cost of sending out extra copies.

Given the pile of work landing on one desk, we're encouraging subscribers to send routine address changes or Turning Points information by fax, e-mail, or regular mail. That will free up the phone for those who have questions and need personal assistance.

The good news is that we're anticipating a major upgrade to the database software used by the General Board. The new system will do a number of subscriptions tasks automatically that currently are done manually. As we prepare for this change, scheduled now for August, we will also be taking time to examine our subscription categories and processes.

It's likely that a rate increase for clubs (we already raised the individual rate last year) will accompany the change. Now that MESSENGER is self-supporting, our subscription and ad revenue must cover our production and staffing costs. While we have shouldered most of the burden by reducing staff and finding ways to save on printing costs, we will need to pass some of it along to readers. We trust that you will understand the need and be willing to keep MESSENGER a strong magazine.

One of our loyal readers wrote this month to tell us her response to our new financial need: She is pledging to send us $20 every other month. She is committed to helping ensure that MESSENGER is available for generations to come. The spirit of that letter buoys us for a long time.

We hope readers will contribute in other ways as well—by reading MESSENGER cover to cover, reflecting with an open mind on the variety of ideas in its pages, encouraging others to subscribe, writing Letters to the Editor, sending information for the In Touch pages, and generally embracing it as the family newsletter for Brethren.

It's the Christmas letter, the Easter letter, the Thanksgiving letter, and much more. Without it, we might be tempted to go our separate ways, forgetting that we are part of a larger community of faith that acts in our name in places far beyond our individual locations and experiences.

Wendy McFadden

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True welcome

A true welcome to any church can be a blue sign saying the building is accessible. First Church of the Brethren in St. Petersburg, Fla., learned that lesson from their own members with disabilities. To welcome and accommodate them, the church has added an enlarged restroom, for men or women, by converting two narrow restrooms near the foyer. The new facility provides ample turning space and allows a sitting person to park comfortably at the sink. For emergencies, a pull chain signals for help by turning on two lights outside the room.

Total cost of the project was $13,700.—Jean Lersch

Disappeared China missionaries remembered

On December 2, 1937, three Brethren missionaries in Show Yang, China, received telephone calls asking for help. The three responded to the calls and were never seen nor heard from again. Sixty years later their lives and Christian service were remembered in a commemorative service at Broadfording Church of the Brethren Fellowship in Hagerstown, Md.

The missionaries—Minneva Neher and Alva and Mary Hykes Harsh—reportedly had experienced increased war-related difficulty as the Japanese army occupied the area.

The anniversary program included tributes by John Mowen, nephew of Mary Hykes Harsh, and E. Paul Weaver, Alva Harsh's college roommate. Hymns included "Living for Jesus," which Minneva Neher had sung at her last mission conference in April 1937 at Ping Ting, China, and "Are Ye Able," which the Harshes had sung together at a 1936 Christmas program. There was a brief ceremony at a monument to the disappeared missionaries in the Broadfording church cemetery.

Bridgewater College

Home for the night *in a cardboard box was Jennifer T. Sappington of Bridgewater, Va. She is a junior majoring in psychology at Bridgewater College.*

Alternative spring break

Rather than head for the beaches, some 49 **Bridgewater College** students spent their spring break volunteering as construction workers with Habitat for Humanity. The students spent the last week in February working on a Habitat project in Miami, Fla. To raise money for the trip, and to raise awareness of homelessness, the students spent one February night sleeping in cardboard boxes on the campus mall.

Meanwhile, more than 100 students at **Elizabethtown College** went without food for 30 hours in February to raise money and awareness for the hungry and homeless. The "30-hour Famine" was a benefit for World Vision, a nonprofit Christian relief organization.

Stop running like a Deere

The Western Plains District spreads out over Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and part of New Mexico, so district executive Richard Hanley is on the road and away from his family often. To compensate, the district board recently directed Hanley to take more time off, and encouraged him to go ahead with his dream of restoring an antique John Deere "A" tractor. At the January executive committee meeting, ministry commission chair David Smalley (also a Congregational Life Team coordinator) and board chair Ken Frantz presented Hanley with a John Deere cap and a book on classic John Deere tractors, sent to him by former board member Adrian Sayler.—David Smalley

Elizabethtown College

These pottery vessels *were unearthed in the Ephrata Cloister Excavation. They consist primarily of redware, which suggests the ascetic nature of the commune life at the cloister. Redware was both inexpensive and readily available, a finding consistent with the community's goal to experience impoverishment.*

Ephrata excavation

Artifacts unearthed at the Ephrata (Pa.) Cloister by **Elizabethtown College** have been on display at the college's Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups. The excavation is under the direction of Steve Warfel, senior curator at the State Museum of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg. The exhibit provides insights into the monastic life of the Ephrata Cloister, a Christian society with roots in the Pietist and Anabaptist movements. The cloister, organized in 1732, flourished until the late 18th century. It was known for its printing, distinctive choral music, manuscript ornamentation, strict discipline, and ascetic lifestyle. Conrad Beissel, founder of Ephrata, had close ties with the Brethren.

Brethren contribute to consultation in Geneva

For the fifth time, representatives of the Church of the Brethren have taken an active role in consultations featuring interaction between the historic peace churches, their European counterparts, and Lutheran and Reformed theologians.

The meeting, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in February, continued a series of consultations held in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1986, 1987, and 1989, and in Geneva in 1994. The conference, designated "Prague V," included interpretations of "justification" and "sanctification" by the participating churches.

Brethren participants were Lauree Hersch Meyer, director of the doctor of ministry program at Colgate Rochester Divinity School, and Don Durnbaugh, retired, a Fellow of the Young Center for the Study of Anabaptism and Pietism at Elizabethtown College.

Unsung Hero

John Shonk, 90 years old this month, was recently featured in the *Lafayette Journal and Courier* as an "Unsung Hero" for his work as a founder of Mediation Services of Tippecanoe County, which provides conflict resolution workshops. Shonk, a retired schoolteacher, is a member of Lafayette (Ind.) Church of the Brethren and a graduate of Manchester College. While he copes with Parkinson's disease as a resident of Mulberry Lutheran Village, Shonk still advocates for nonviolence. "Conflict is inevitable, but it's what we do with conflict that is important," Shonk told the newspaper. "It can be constructive or destructive."

Wichita mentor "hires" a youth to learn

"Our children are our future," says Dr. Bob Wilson, a physician and member of Wichita (Kan.) Church of the Brethren. Acting on that belief, Wilson persuaded his medical office to "hire" a disadvantaged youth so he could carry out his personal vision of mentoring. Tyrome Crawford, a 17-year-old whose best friend and cousin were shot to death last year, was hired to work 30 hours a week. Crawford did some filing and faxing, but mostly spent the time reading articles Wilson assigned to him and discussing them later. "It's fun to think about things," Crawford told the *Wichita Eagle*, which featured the two. "He gets you to think."

Jessica Ramirez

"The Final Journey of John Kline" *cast included (seated, from left) Katrina Mevis, Michael Kennel, Frank Ramirez, Sue Charlwood, Melody Eash, (standing, from left) Jaron Kennel, Bart Lefever, Miriam Kauffmann, Jeff Stern-Gilbert, Jennie Ramirez, Evan Lefever, Kate Miller, Mary Kauffmann-Kennel, and Jacob Ramirez.*

The final journey of John Kline

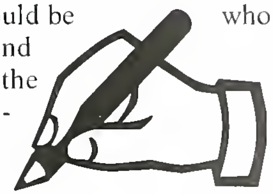
Two hundred and one years after he was born, Church of the Brethren martyr John Kline came to life in "The Final Journey of John Kline," a play written by Lee Krähenbühl.

The complete play was performed for the first time in February by members of Elkhart Valley (Ind.) Church of the Brethren and Elkhart City Church of the Brethren. Other performances were in March and April. The part of John Kline was played by Frank Ramirez, pastor of the Elkhart Valley church, who was also the director.

Kline was a noted Brethren doctor, writer, farmer, inventor, and minister who traveled over 100,000 miles before and during the Civil War in his ministry to the sick and suffering. The play includes lines taken directly from John Kline's diaries and correspondence, as well as excerpts from the memories of his niece, Anna Zigler Bowman. Among the several songs in the play is a chorus written by Kline himself.

The play was originally written for the 1997 celebration of the bicentennial of John Kline's birth, but was presented then only in truncated form. Lee Krähenbühl, author of the play, is copastor of Skyridge Church of the Brethren in Kalamazoo, Mich., and a college professor of drama.

In Touch stories wanted



Do you know someone whose story should be in In Touch? Send us a note about the person, or a full-fledged story, and include a sharp, candid photo, preferably one showing the subject in a setting related to the story.

Remember, we are seeking stories about Brethren who are presently doing interesting, noteworthy things. Don't send biographical sketches or tributes. Stories should be short (350 words maximum) and pointed. If you find a newspaper story that is a natural for In Touch, send us the clipping (including publication name and date).

Hint: Including a good photo remarkably improves your story's chances of making it into print.

Send your suggestions or stories to MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

Congratulations

Hollis and Rena Shaffer, members of First Church of the Brethren, Wichita, Kan., recently celebrated their 72nd wedding anniversary.

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

News

Judy Mills Reimer is called to serve as executive director

Judy Mills Reimer, former Church of the Brethren Annual Conference moderator and former General Board chair from Goodview, Va., on March 9 was called to serve as executive director of the Church of the Brethren General Board. This announcement was made at the start of the General Board's spring meetings at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

Nevin Dulabaum

Congratulations! *Judy Mills Reimer (right), is congratulated March 9 by General Board member Mary Jo Flory-Steury, Executive Director Search Committee chair, following Reimer's introduction to salaried staff as the Board's executive director designate. After interviews during two days with Reimer and one other candidate, the Board called Reimer late March 8 to serve as its top administrator. She will begin in July.*

Reimer is founding pastor of Smith Mountain Lake Church of the Brethren, Moneta, Va., serving there since January 1996. She has been an active participant and leader in all levels of church life, reaching the pinnacle of Brethren service in July 1993 when she was elected Annual Conference moderator. Reimer also served on the General Board from 1985 until 1990, serving as chair during her final two years.

The formal introduction of Reimer was made by Board chair Chris Bowman, who stated that the 24-member board had reached its decision to call Reimer by consensus in a closed session the previous evening.

"I do feel that this is God's call through this board," Reimer said in a brief response. "To those of you who are on the General Board staff, I am thrilled, I am honored, I am excited to be a General Board employee with you."

The General Board's top executive position has not been permanently occupied since Donald Miller retired as general secretary in December 1996 after a decade of service. Karen Peterson Miller of Hagerstown, Md., served as interim general secretary until last July, when the title was changed to executive director. When the board failed to call the candidate submitted to it by a previous search committee, she subsequently served as interim executive director throughout1997. Joseph Mason of Greenville, Ohio, assumed the interim executive director position in January.

Reimer, who is scheduled to be formally installed as executive director in July at the 212th Annual Conference in Orlando, will relocate with her husband, George, to Elgin, Ill. She will assume her new responsibilities following Annual Conference.

In remarks to the board following the announcement, Reimer issued a challenge for all to walk with God's newness in tomorrow's challenges, staying close to God through scriptural study, reflecting Jesus' teachings in our living. "For we walk by faith, not by sight," she said, echoing the theme for this summer's National Youth Conference (2 Cor. 5:7).

Reimer earned a master of divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary in 1994, and was ordained that May. She earned her undergraduate degree in 1962 from Emory & Henry College, Emory, Va., which last year awarded her the William and Martha Defriece Award for her "outstanding, worthwhile contribution to civilization or humanity."

As a representative of the church, Reimer has traveled throughout the United States and to Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, Sudan, and Nigeria. She currently serves as volunteer coordinator of the General Board's Ministry Summer Service, an internship-like program that places young adults in congregations, camps, and districts. She also currently serves as board vice-chair of Association of Brethren Caregivers.

In addition to her church-related experiences, she and George have longtime business experience as owners of Harris Office Furniture in

News items are intended to inform. They do not necessarily represent the opinions of MESSENGER *or the General Board, and should not be considered to be an endorsement or advertisement.*

Roanoke, Va., since 1976. Prior to that, Reimer served as a public school teacher for 11 years.

Location. Where will the centralized offices of the Church of the Brethren General Board be located in the future? That question, which for the past three years has been asked by the Board, is far from being answered. In fact, during its meetings, the Board approved expanding the committee that is addressing the issue and redirecting the committee's focus.

After convening five times in person or by phone over the past year—including visits to both campuses—the site committee determined that the sale of either or both of the General Board's Elgin, Ill., and New Windsor, Md., properties would barely yield enough income to pay for site development at an existing or a new location and employee severance or moving expenses, thus leaving little to be invested for the future. With that realization, the committee concluded that the properties are most valuable to their present users.

The committee also reported that other denominational organizations have expressed interest in locating at a central denominational site. The committee added, however, that a General Board site decision isn't practical until it decides the future of three of its New Windsor-based ministries and programs—the conference center, SERRV International, and Material Resources.

Thus, though the General Board asserted its role in the location decision as owner of the Elgin and New Windsor properties, it approved the site committee's recommendation to expand the committee's size and focus to include national Brethren agencies that are interested in being headquartered at a single denominational site. The Board approved the recommendation that it determine the future of its New Windsor-based ministries and programs. The Board also approved a recommendation to consider options for consolidating financial, computer, and other services among the General Board and other denominational agencies, even if it maintains two sites for the near future.

Nevin Dulabaum

Fish bowl *was the description of the method used by the General Board's Leadership Team directors in March to report to Board members one challenge each of the nine directors is currently addressing. During his turn, director of Ministry Allen Hansell (across the table, right) describes the denomination's need to recruit 500 new church leaders within the next five years.*

Spiritual renewal. An emphasis on spiritual renewal and stewardship will be launched by the General Board later this year in an attempt "to increase the mission and ministry potential of local congregations and, in turn, districts and the General Board." Five related recommendations presented to the Board were approved—

- creating a 52-day "covenant calendar" that begins on World Communion Sunday (Oct. 4) and concludes on Thanksgiving (Nov. 26). Each day will include scripture readings and prayer requests.
- developing Church of the Brethren-specific worship resources with calls to worship, offertory prayers, and personal stories.
- developing daily activities for families and individuals with specific spiritual disciplines such as prayer partners, fasting ideas, Bible study,

Nevin Dulabaum

Chris Bowman, *General Board chair, in March moderates the debate regarding the Board's response to the heightened tension between the United States and Iraq. Looking on are Elaine Sollenberger (left), Annual Conference moderator; Lori Sollenberger Knepp, Board vice-chair; and Merv Keeney and David Radcliff (standing), directors of the Board's Global Mission Partnerships and Brethren Witness.*

and stewardship activities that allow for witnessing of faith.

- leading an Annual Conference insight session on spiritual renewal.
- presenting spiritual renewal at this year's National Older Adult and National Youth conferences.

New church development. The General Board approved creating a task team that will produce a new church development proposal. Once task force members are named, a two-day conference will be scheduled for the group to explore new church development issues. The task force will then seek feedback and input from district executives as it drafts an initial proposal, which is expected by Annual Conference. A finalized proposal is expected to be submitted to the General Board in October.

Sudan. A new three-year initiative to assist Christians in war-ravaged southern Sudan was approved by the General Board. This initiative, which focuses on the needs of women and children, will also fund peace and justice training, provide a Brethren Volunteer Service worker, and purchase a computer for office work and bicycles for transportation. The three-year cost of this initiative will not exceed $238,000, and will be provided by the General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund (GFCF).

"Sudan: Partnership for Peace" is an initiative of the General Board's Brethren Witness office, in conjunction with the Global Mission Partnerships office and the New Sudan Council of Churches.

Other business. During its meetings the General Board also:

- approved a statement on the recent increased tensions between the United States and Iraq, in which the Board pledges to proclaim its faith that God is both present in the United States and in Iraq. The Board also will "join with international organizations and ecumenical colleagues to search for ways to provide for the health and well-being of the Iraqi people and to seek reconciliation between our peoples," and will "peacefully resist all efforts to resolve this conflict by military force."

Nevin Dulabaum

And soon there will be nine. *The General Board's Leadership Team, beginning in July, will include Judy Mills Reimer (front); Wendy McFadden and Ken Neher (second row); Allen Hansell and Judy Keyser (third row); David Radcliff, Merv Keeney, Glenn Timmons, and Dan McFadden (fourth row).*

- approved a proposed plan of operation submitted to it by the Mission and Ministries Planning Council (MMPC), one of the most important but relatively undefined aspects of the General Board's new design. The MMPC, which was created to discuss mission and ministries proposals from congregations, districts or the Annual Conference Standing Committee, reports to the Board.
- rejected two requests relating to the General Board's former mission in South Korea from a world mission group of two dozen Brethren . The group sought permission to send a letter to all Church of the Brethren congregations to determine which congregations would have interest in supporting specific missions sponsored by the General Board. It also was seeking permission to announce and implement a three-year, $75,000-a-year appeal to individuals and congregations to keep the Board's former staff member in South Korea working there on the group's behalf.
- affirmed the progress made in the move by SERRV International to incorporate as an independent organization as early as late October. When finalized, the General Board will no longer be liable for SERRV's inventory liability and SERRV will be more able to adapt to the demands of the competitive handcrafts market.
- directed its Executive Committee to meet with the Leadership Team to discuss the creation of task teams that would assist with the Board's work.
- appointed Wendy McFadden, director/publisher of Brethren Press, to serve as acting executive director in the absence of the executive director.
- approved changes to its former Crisis in Transition Fund, including a name change to Ministry Assistance Fund. This fund will now address the short-term needs of active ordained ministers. Long-term needs of active ministers, other church workers, and retired church workers will be handled by Brethren Benefit Trust.
- heard a report from Joseph Mason, who said Brethren should celebrate the prospect of the highest-attended National Youth Conference, to be held this summer; the strong response to combat famine in North Korea; the General Board's better-than-expected year-end financial report; the filling of all major General Board staff positions; the 75th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria; the 50th anniversary of Brethren Volunteer Service; and the success of the General Board's largest Disaster Response building project, the Butler Chapel A.M.E. church in Orangeburg, S.C.—Nevin Dulabaum

General Board adds Myers to Congregational Life Team

Donald Myers

Donald Myers on February 1 began serving as half-time staff for the Church of the Brethren General Board's Area 1 Congregational Life Team. He had been serving as interim executive for Southern Pennsylvania District. Myers is moderator of East Fairview Church of the Brethren, Manheim, Pa. He is a graduate of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College. Myers earned a master's degree from Western Maryland College and a doctorate from Temple University.

Emergency Response helps Tennessee flood victims

Following the assessment of damage in Tennessee caused by winter flooding, the Church of the Brethren General Board's Emergency Response/Service Ministries (ERSM) in February began a new project at Roan Mountain, Tenn.

A request for $25,000 by Miller Davis, ERSM manager, was approved to help 275 families with cleanup and rebuilding. Homeowners in the area lacked flood insurance because floods there are rare.

Following ice storms that hit the northeastern United States, $25,000 was allocated in January to purchase electric generators.

Work continues in Grand Forks, N.D., where volunteers are installing drywall, replacing floors and insulation, repairing basements, and hanging new doors.

The Material Resources division of ERSM recently shipped seven 20-foot containers of relief materials to North Korea under the auspices of Church World Service. The contents consisted of clothing, blankets, quilts, and medicines.

Two additional 40-foot-long containers full of blankets were shipped to the Republic of Georgia under the auspices of the United Methodist Committee for Relief.

Heifer Project closes office at Brethren Service Center

Heifer Project International in February announced it is closing its southeastern regional office, located at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. The April 10 closing affects four full-time employees and one part-time employee.

"In order to better serve our volunteers and donors as far away as Florida, we've decided to recruit and hire a church relations staff person in the Atlanta area, or at least more centrally located for all the states in the Atlantic South region," reads a Heifer Project statement.

Dan West, a Church of the Brethren member, started a ministry that in June 1942 became an official program of the Brethren Service Committee. That ministry eventually evolved into Heifer Project International, which became an independent, nonprofit organization in April 1953.

Registrations roll in for NYC and NOAC

Nevin Dulabaum

Rolling registrations. *Brian Yoder, National Youth Conference '98 coordinator, in January launches the first marble down the 100-foot-long marble run that is used to tally NYC registrants. As of March 5, 3,503 marbles had been launched on the run.*

Registrations for the Church of the Brethren National Youth Conference (NYC) are running ahead of the number at this time four years ago. The event is scheduled for July 28–August 2 at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo. All registrations and fees are due by May 1. The NYC office hopes final registration numbers will exceed 5,000.

Among the speakers lined up for NYC is Bernice King, daughter of Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King.

Registrations are also streaming in to the office of the Association of Brethren Caregivers for the fourth biennial National Older Adult Conference, scheduled for August 31–September 4 at Lake Junaluska, N.C. Among the scheduled NOAC speakers are W. Andrew Achenbaum, senior research scientist for the Institute of Gerontology at the University of Michigan and "the nation's best known scholar on the history of aging and old-age policy," and Merrilyn Belgum, a stand-up comedian and former faculty member at the University of Minnesota.

Batavia, Ill., sanctuary destroyed by fire

Fire caused thousands of dollars of damage to Faith Church of the Brethren, Batavia, Ill., on March 2.

The heaviest damage was in the sanctuary. The congregation will worship in another part of the building for the immediate future, according to Erin Matteson, pastor.

Investigators have not determined the cause of the blaze, though there is no evidence of foul play.

Matteson said contributions to assist the church in rebuilding its sanctuary can be sent directly to the church at 613 N. Van Buren St., Batavia IL 60510.

Brethren Benefit Trust makes staff changes

Jim Replogle, former director of Planned Giving for the General Board, joined the Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) staff February 1 as director of Deferred Gifts Services.

Mark Pitman, formerly director of the Brethren Foundation, has assumed the new title of director of Brethren Foundation Operations.

Jim Replogle

Mark Pitman

Darryl Deardorff

Kathy Lee

Michael Addison

Pitman, based in Elgin, Ill., will provide support for Foundation operations and oversight for Asset Management Services, which currently administers over $50 million in investments. Replogle, based in Bridgewater, Va., will support the stewardship and planned gift efforts of denominational agencies and will assist people who wish to make deferred or income-producing gifts. BBT's Gift Management Services currently manages about $2.3 million in deferred gifts.

Pitman and Replogle will report to **Darryl Deardorff**, who in January was appointed BBT's interim chief financial officer. Deardorff had been supervising BBT's investment program, computer operations, and expanded financial services planning.

Kathy Lee has resigned as treasurer, effective June15. She and her family, who have attended Highland Ave., Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Ill., are relocating to southern Ohio. Lee has been employed by BBT since January 1993.

Michael Addison of Boulder Hill Church of the Brethren, Montgomery, Ill., has been hired as controller and Information Systems director.

Thomas Kepple Jr. succeeds Neff as Juniata president

The 11th president of Juniata College will be **Thomas Kepple Jr.**, currently vice president for Business and Community Relations at The University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn. Kepple, who will assume his new duties July 1, succeeds Robert W. Neff, who retires June 30 after 12 years as president. Prior to joining Juniata, Neff served as general secretary of the Church of the Brethren General Board in Elgin, Ill. Juniata is one of five colleges and one university affiliated with the Church of the Brethren.

Thomas Kepple Jr.

Kepple will bring many skills to the position, said John Cramer, chair of Juniata's board of trustees.

"Dr. Kepple possesses a set of skills and experiences that are ideally suited to Juniata College," Cramer said. "From his exceptional work in developing and implementing strategic plans to his broad experience in academic affairs, admissions, and fund raising, Dr. Kepple has the requisite skills to lead Juniata into the 21st century."

"For 121 years Juniata College has had a reputation for academic excellence," Kepple said. "My primary goal will be to keep the college focused on its mission of offering the high-quality education that Juniata graduates and current students have come to expect."

Kepple's duties at The University of the South have included serving as the university's chief business manager as well as manager of the town of Sewanee, which sits on some of the 10,000 acres of land owned by the university.

Kepple graduated from Westminster College in 1970 with a bachelor of arts degree in economics and business. He received a master of business administration degree in 1974 and a doctorate in 1984, both from Syracuse University.

Leadership changes are made by three eastern districts

Georgia Markey has been named associate executive of Southern Pennsylvania District, effective January 17. For the past several years she has served as assistant to the executive.

J. Rogers Fike has been appointed interim executive of West Marva District. He is a former General Board member.

Howard Miller of Westminster, Md., has been called to serve as interim associate executive of Mid-Atlantic District at least through June. He recently retired from General Board employment as a financial resources counselor.

Georgia Markey

J. Rogers Fike

Howard Miller

In Brief

Order forms for the 1998 Yearbook are now available. This year's Church of the Brethren yearbook will come in a new format—a 6" x 9" softbound book. It will include a comprehensive listing of denominational organizations, including the redesigned General Board. It also will list denominational employees, licensed and ordained ministers, e-mail addresses and denominational statistics from 1997.

Yearbooks can be ordered by check, credit card, or standing order with Brethren Press. Cost is $17.50. For more information, contact Brethren Press Customer Service at 800 441-3712.

Bethany Theological Seminary has received a $200,000 grant from the Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc. to conduct a joint program with Earlham School of Religion (ESR), which will increase the technical capabilities of both institutions for teaching and learning. The grant will be disbursed over three years. New computer hardware and software will be purchased and a full-time information technology support staff person will be hired.

A shipment of used manual typewriters and books, donated by Brethren from across the country, arrived in Nigeria on December 18. The materials included books for the Kulp Bible College library near Mubi, textbooks and typewriters for the Mason Technical School in Garkida, and a Braille Bible.

The shipment had been in process for many months while the clearing and shipping processes were being finalized by staff at the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md. Many of the typewriters had been collected by the Church of the Brethren Western Plains District.

Fifteen members of Southern Pennsylvania District traveled to the Dominican Republic in February to participate in a workcamp.The main focus of the camp was the construction of a church in the village of Arroyo Saludo. Alan Miller, pastor of Shippensburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren coordinated the trip in cooperation with the district's witness commission.

The 228th Unit of Brethren Volunteer Service *completed its orientation February 6 at Camp Ithiel in Gotha, Fla. From left: Matthias Lehmphul, Andreas Tillmann, Florian Kroeger, M.C. Roth, Petra Beck (BVS orientation assistant), Nancy Zook, Costa Nicolaidis, Todd Reish (BVS orientation coordinator), and Jonathan Martin.*

Seven young adults from Michigan, Virginia, Washington State and Germany have completed Brethren Volunteer Service orientation in Florida and have joined their respective projects in the United States and Europe. "Orientation tries to raise awareness for social issues that are pressing for many people in today's world," said Petra Beck, BVS staff. "In Florida, with its many citrus groves, strawberry fields and vegetable farms, farmworkers' issues are very obvious." Bert Perry of National Farmworker Ministry and Fernando Cuevas of the Farm Labor Organization Committee gave the trainees opportunities to experience the work expected of farmworkers, and to understand the workers' struggles for better working conditions and wages. Guest speaker Matt Guynn, who lives and works in the Philadelphia area, directed a two-day workshop on nonviolence and peacemaking. In the middle of the second day, Guynn challenged the group in an unusual way: He asked each volunteer to draft a short speech about a topic of concern, and then took the group to a busy downtown Orlando street corner where they stood on a bucket and delivered their speeches.

The inaugural edition of "The Third Day," an environmental newsletter published by the Church of the Brethren General Board's Brethren Witness office, was mailed in late January. The six-page publication is a collaborative effort drawing on the expertise of a small group of Brethren environmentalists who comprise an ad hoc environmental advisory committee with the Brethren Witness office. The newsletter's title refers to the third day of creation—the day that God first brought living things into being. Individuals wishing to receive this newsletter should contact Karin Davidson at kdavidson_gb@brethren.org or at 800 323-8039.

The York Center Church of the Brethren on March 15 celebrated the life and mission of Bethany Theological Seminary at its former Oak Brook, Ill., campus. York Center served as the home church for Bethany's staff and students from the early 1960s when Bethany relocated there from Chicago until mid-1994,when the seminary moved to Richmond, Ind. The property is in the process of being sold and all of the buildings have been razed. "The purpose of this service is to express our gratitude for Bethany's ministry through the years, to share our memories related to Bethany's Chicago-area location, to confess our need for healing as we grieve the changing Oak Brook property, and to open ourselves to the gift of renewed hope for the future," said Christy Waltersdorff, pastor, in a letter inviting people to the event.

Wanted: A new heart for ministry

BY FLETCHER FARRAR

Church of the Brethren congregations are getting serious again about calling people to become ordained ministers. For some it has been so long since they "called" one of their own into the ministry that they've forgotten how. Some thought calling and nurturing prospective new pastors was the responsibility of the pastor. But gradually God and church members are getting together—sometimes through deacons and sometimes with the help of nominating committees—to ask gifted and spirit-filled people to consider starting down the path toward ordination.

> "Being a pastor is "a great way to live life. . . . A minister is invited into the depth of a person's faith and life. What's more important than that? What's more important than being involved in the daily struggles and celebrations of life? It's a wonderful opportunity."

Being a pastor is "a great way to live life," says Allen Hansell, director of ministry on the General Board staff. "A minister is invited into the depth of a person's faith and life. What's more important than that? What's more important than being involved in the daily struggles and celebrations of life? It's a wonderful opportunity."

Eugene Roop, president of Bethany Theological Seminary, often relays to ministry prospects the saying, "It's easier to make a dollar than to make a difference." The pastoral ministry offers the chance to make a difference in individuals and communities. "The church offers the gospel of grace in a world of demands and law. As a pastor, you are simply offering the gospel to people struggling to understand how to be the person God is calling them to be."

These two make it sound attractive. Yet the vocation of pastor has fallen on hard times in recent years. It has gotten a reputation for low pay accompanied by unreasonable expectations, even abuse in some cases, by congregations. Scandals involving televangelists also have taken their toll on what was once an esteemed profession.

All the more reason, says Hansell, for churches to resume their traditional role of nurturing and calling out prospects for the "set-apart" ministry. "In the Church of the Brethren, all people are ministers. But the faith community then calls out for leadership certain ones who then pursue ordination." It is ordination that sets those leaders apart from others who minister. The entire process of calling, equipping, and ordaining becomes holy. It distinguishes churches from those that merely hire a pastor to do a job. And it distinguishes pastors who are called from those who merely volunteer for a profession.

"The climate of the home and the congregation makes a difference," says Hansell. "Sometimes people quite young are thinking about how they're going to spend their lives. The congregation needs to create a climate of nurturing these thoughts and ambitions. We can talk about it more. Parents can talk about it openly and honestly in the home. We can listen carefully and be alert to what people are saying. Pastors can have sermons on what it means to be called."

Hansell emphasizes that the call to ministry can come to anyone, even someone who already has a successful career. "Even after they're ordained they may stay in their old job and be bivocational." And, he says, a person need not be especially devout to be called. "God calls very ordinary people."

Some districts have gone beyond casual nurturing to active recruitment. In 1992 the Atlantic Northeast District asked the district board, pastors, and lay leaders to send the district office names of men and women who should consider the ministry. It received over 150 names and, of those, 55 participated in a series of follow-up "discernment" classes. Of those 55, nine have completed their training and have been ordained and three more are licensed ministers. Those 12 are serving congregations in pastoral roles. Four others are serving the church in other leadership roles, and another 12 of the original 55 are in ministry training programs.

Southern Pennsylvania and Virlina districts both followed later with similar successful programs. On May 1 and

The crucial role of districts

District executives are finding it more difficult to assist congregations in calling pastoral leadership. Congregations want experienced and well-trained pastors, but there are just not enough to go around. This situation is complicated by the fact that many congregations cannot afford to pay a full-time pastor.

The Ministry Advisory Council, composed of the partners engaged in ministry and ministry training (districts, the seminary, the Committee on Higher Education, and the General Board), has been meeting since the fall of 1996 to implement the recommendations of the Annual Conference paper on Ministerial Leadership.

Many congregations have lost sight of their role of encouraging their members to consider the set-apart ministry. In fact it is not uncommon to hear words of discouragement to those considering a call to ministry. The office of ministry is not granted the respect it once carried. The district can help congregations reclaim their role of calling out ministerial leadership.

District ministry commissions play a critical role in helping people to discern their gifts for ministry. They also play a role in calling, evaluating readiness, training, encouraging, nurturing, supervising, and sometimes disciplining pastors. This is a complex role, one that many commissions are not well prepared to fulfill. One of the high priorities of denominational ministry staff is to work with district executives to facilitate their work. This includes clarification of polity on licensing and ordination; resources for evaluating the gifts and readiness for ministry; training for ethics committees dealing with clergy and congregational ethics issues; and assistance in providing ministry training options such as the Three-Year Reading Course, the Brethren Academy, or scholarship aid to Bethany students.

Pastoral placement is often cited by district executives and district boards as their highest priority. The placement process is complex, requiring much energy and effort to help congregations discern the style of leadership that will help them fulfill their vision as a church, while also helping candidates discern God's call for their lives and ministry. A district executive must be well acquainted with the congregation, knowing its leadership, culture, and its understanding of God's call.

Of equal importance is the role district executives play as "pastor to pastors." The district executive is the one person to whom pastors can turn for support, encouragement, and sometimes advocacy, when they encounter difficulties in their ministry. District executives and discipleship and reconciliation committees are often instrumental in resolving issues between pastors and their congregations. In turn, district executives are often mentors to pastors as they develop their gifts for ministry. Frequently DEs are called upon to provide links between pastors and congregations, the General Board, and other agencies of the church.

As more people are called to the set-apart ministry later in life and are already involved in other vocations, the church must respond to the challenge of providing adequate preparation and training for these bivocational pastors. In many districts, the Three-Year Reading Course is offered as one option for ministry training for pastors who are not able to attend seminary or participate in other training programs.—Nancy Knepper

Nancy Knepper is coordinator of district ministries on the General Board staff.

2 this year Middle Pennsylvania District is scheduled to host up to 40 people who are exploring an interest in ministry. Sessions are planned on the meaning of call, an explanation of the licensing process, and options for education and training, according to Randy Yoder, district executive.

It will take all of this and more to meet the need for new pastors in the next few years, according to Hansell. One study projects that nearly 300 pastors will retire by 2005. With retirement and other vacancies, the Church of the Brethren needs to call and train for the ministry 80 people a year, but last year only 30 were called and trained. The denominational ministry office has set the goal of having 500 men and women called and trained for the set-apart ministry by the end of 2003.

The current effort has its background in the Committee on Ministerial Leadership, which delivered its final report to the 1996 Annual Conference. The committee made a series of recommendations and called for a five-year emphasis on ministry and leadership development in the Church of the Brethren. Preparations have been underway, culminating last October with the formation of the General Board's new ministry office, which includes the director of ministry, a coordinator of district ministries, and the coordinators of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. Now the machinery is in place for the five-year-emphasis to begin.

Of course nobody expects the task of finding pastors to be over in five years. But one by one the issues that sometimes stand in the way of ministry recruitment are being identified and addressed. Most ministry prospects have questions about education and training.

"Without a sense of call, no amount of education will do much good," says Hansell. "Yet we think training is important. You need to be equipped. And seminary is the preferred route of training. Bethany is the way to go." Bethany Theological Seminary at Richmond, Ind., has

The Brethren Academy

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership coordinates non-degree programs in ministry training, continuing education opportunities for pastors, and training events focused on leadership development. The Academy office, located at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., is a denominational partnership between the General Board's ministry office and Bethany.

The Brethren Academy is an umbrella for a variety of ministry training options, other than the degree programs at the seminary. The options include two certificate programs—Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM) and Training in Ministry (TRIM). EFSM offers congregationally based training designed to equip a pastoral and lay team for leadership in small membership churches. TRIM features a combination of college work, district-sponsored courses, special workshops and seminars, supervised ministry experience, and participation in a ministry formation group. An orientation for the 1998 entering class for TRIM students and EFSM congregations will be held at Bethany Theological Seminary, July 18-22, 1998.

Another Academy event held each January is a week-long intensive at Bethany. This year's course, "Exploring Our Brethren Heritage," was taught by Donald F. Durnbaugh, with 33 students in attendance.

The Brethren Academy enters into partnerships with many agencies and groups to sponsor leadership training opportunities. For example, the Summer Extension School, working in cooperation with districts, is held each summer at a Church of the Brethren college. It will be held in July this year at Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa. The Academy works with districts to strengthen their specific educational events, such as the Three-Year Reading Course (or its equivalent), or the Theological Institute of the Church of the Brethren in Puerto Rico.

The Brethren Academy has also been given the challenge of providing opportunities for leadership development, which will enhance ministry within the denomination. Currently, an Academy research project is seeking to learn more about bivocational ministry within the Church of the Brethren. The initial results of this research will be presented at the ministry training luncheon during Annual Conference.

Other emerging projects for the Academy include exploring the possibilities of distance learning through technology; partnering with Congregational Life Ministries to sponsor continuing education for pastors; partnering with Ministry Summer Service to provide summer internships for young adults; and working with the Center for Creative Church Leadership to train pastors and other leaders.—Harriet and Ron Finney

Harriet and Ron Finney are coordinators of the Brethren Academy.

worked closely with the denominational ministry office to develop numerous educational opportunities even for those who can't live on campus and go to school full time. And Bethany tries to help students with financial aid in partnership with congregations, districts, and alumni.

"Seminary helps to foster a reflective, thoughtful ministry as well as skillful leadership," says Bethany President Roop. "It is for one who can live out of the life of the spirit and call others to that life as well." Roop says some seminarians, especially Bethany's younger students, consider their education to be part of their discernment process, helping them to decide whether to pursue pastoral ministry as a profession.

For ministry candidates who cannot attend seminary, the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership offers nondegree training programs, including Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM) and Training in Ministry (TRIM). (See sidebar.)

While much of the emphasis is on calling, and working with those who are called, Hansell's office is also working with congregations to eliminate roadblocks to ministry. Some congregations have found ways to be better employers for their pastor by assessing themselves in light of the recent Annual Conference paper on congregational ethics. Others have become more open to minorities and women as pastors.

"This is a huge concern," says Hansell. "More than 50 percent of those enrolled in seminary are women. After they invest all that time in getting a seminary education, some find that there are not as many opportunities for them to be placed in a church."

The ministry office is calling on all in the church to develop a new heart for ministry. "The ministry of the church belongs to all of us," says Hansell. "Pastors cannot lead well unless they have committed folks who want their congregations to be transformed by the Spirit of God. And congregations cannot thrive unless they have pastoral leaders who are committed to the call of God and the church."

With retirement and other vacancies, the Church of the Brethren needs to call and train for the ministry 80 people a year, but last year only 30 were called and trained. The denominational ministry office has set the goal of having 500 men and women called and trained for the set-apart ministry by the end of 2003.

Brethrening

Cold feet no more

Western Pennsylvania district delegates always sit together at Annual Conference. This past year at Long Beach we had two people who had never attended an Annual Conference before. They were Nancy Johnson of Ligonier Church of the Brethren and Terry Berkebile representing Walnut Grove Church of the Brethren.

My uncle, Harry Deffenbaugh, saved the seats for our section each day. Nancy and I got there the first day and ended up sitting toward the end of one of the rows. Terry was there earlier but went back to his room to get some different shoes and socks because his feet were cold from the ice below the floor in the arena. Because he came in last he ended up sitting by Nancy instead of where he originally was.

Terry and Nancy hit it off right from the start. Those of us from Western Pennsylvania kept encouraging them to spend time together because it was quite apparent there was great interest on both their parts. We all would conveniently have plans for dinner, so they would have to spend time getting to know each other. What a bunch of matchmakers!

Terry and Nancy lived 30 or 40 miles from each other back in Pennsylvania, but that didn't stop them from beginning to date when they came home. One thing led to another and I am happy to say that on December 31, Nancy and Terry were married at Walnut Grove Church of the Brethren by pastor Mike Clark.

A lot of good things come out of Annual Conference! Nancy and Terry say now they have to attend Conference every year to celebrate their meeting one another.
—Shelby F. McCoy, Friedens, Pa.

Messenger *would like to publish other short, colorful, and humorous stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submission to* Messenger, *Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at fffarrar@midwest.net.*

Phil Grout

LIVING *with dying*

BY DALE AUKERMAN

The One who died and rose again is the victor over cancer, heart disease, AIDS, Alzheimer's, schizophrenia, abuse of children. . . . But if Christ already has the victory over such things, why are they so much in evidence? Why do they seem to have such encompassing dominion?

My wife, Ruth, and I were finishing a meal in a Chinese restaurant. I broke open a fortune cookie and read the words, "Your deepest wish will be fulfilled." As someone likely to die quite soon, I smiled at getting this as my fortune. The first thought that came to me was, yes, the wish that I would continue to live much longer with my loved ones.

But later I got to reflecting. That was not at all right. What I want most should have to do, not with longer life, but with living for the glory of God and toward the coming of God's kingdom. With that as my deepest desire I can look confidently to God to help me toward its fulfillment, whether my remaining time on earth is very short or relatively long. The shallow fortune cookie prediction would turn out to be true.

On November 5, 1996, I found out that I had a tumor three and a half inches across on my left lung. Later tests showed that the cancer had spread to the liver, the right hip, and two spots in the spine. I learned that I could figure on living two to six months, with a median survival prospect of four months.

It's amazing the reorientation of outlook that can come when you find out that you may have only a couple of months to live. Each day and each close relationship became much more precious than before. Every morning I would think of which new day of the month it was—this further day given by God. With fresh intentness I gazed at my family, my home, and God's creation, knowing that my time for seeing all this might very soon be at an end. In the anointing service held not long after the diagnosis I confessed that I had not been giving God nearly enough attention. Through the cancer God certainly gained much more of my attention.

When my sister Jane died of an especially lethal form of cancer at the age of 14, my mother saw this as God's will: God chose to take her, and who were we as human beings to challenge that? For some people this type of view gives comfort. I see such things somewhat differently. I don't think God sends cancer or heart disease or Alzheimer's. When a drunken driver swerves into another car and kills a number of people, I don't believe that is God's will.

> WITH FRESH INTENTNESS I GAZED AT MY FAMILY, MY HOME, AND GOD'S CREATION, KNOWING THAT MY TIME FOR SEEING ALL THIS MIGHT VERY SOON BE AT AN END.

So much in the world is not what God intended and not what God wants. Around us are the threatening powers of death, rebel powers within God's creation. In 2 Corinthians 12:7, Paul wrote of his troubling ailment, that thorn in the flesh. He called it "a messenger of Satan." God has messengers, agents that represent his dominion. Things like cancer are agents of the contrary power that enforces the dominion of death.

Take lung cancer as an example. Some people smoke and bring on lung cancer. I'm in the 7 percent of victims who have never been smokers. But I've not taken up the useless question, "Why me?" Such illness can come to anyone. Embracing modern technology, we have messed up the environment with all sorts of pollutants. I live downwind from a cement plant that through the years has burned some terrible things in its kilns. A millionth of a gram of plutonium is enough to cause lung cancer in a person. All of us have in our bodies some plutonium from nuclear weapons production, testing, and use. In so many ways humanity aligns itself with the powers and agents of death.

But God is with us as the One who stands against death. In more ways than we can notice or comprehend, God turns back the powers of death. As a boy I came near to being killed under a farm wagon. Several years later I almost died from what may have been arsenic poisoning. I've had close calls in automobiles. A few years ago I was attacked in a truck by a steer with horns. He charged twice, then stopped and walked out of the truck. After six cycles of chemotherapy, a regimen of nutritional supplements, and so much praying by a host of friends, I had another CAT scan, which showed that the tumor on my lung had shrunk to less than one-fourth of its earlier size. Two of the doctors spoke of that as a miracle. In an amazing way, contrary to the medical probabilities, God has held back death from me and given longer life.

God brings into existence every living creature and every one of us. God is also the Sustainer, holding up into existence each creature and each of us. All of us have had times of rescue from death. All of us have experienced God's power of healing many times—even from something so common as a cold. As just one dimension, the immune system of the human body is an incredible array of defenses against attack. God keeps us in life by turning back the forces of death.

After my diagnosis I started to pray much more for people with cancer. A number of those on my prayer list have died. For some God brings about full healing from a disease such as cancer. For others God graciously gives a considerable length of time before the end. There are those who die so soon. Death was not part of God's original intention for humanity. But all of us have sinned, and for each of us the time comes when God no longer holds back death, and one by one we seem to be given over to that dark power.

In Ephesians 1:19-22 Paul writes of "the immeasurable greatness of [God's] power" by which "he raised [Christ] from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places." We read: God "has put all things under" the feet of Christ, that is, God has brought Christ to victorious dominion over all rebel powers. This is a biblical image for triumphant conquest and subjugating rule. The One who died and rose again is the victor over cancer, heart disease, AIDS, Alzheimer's, schizophrenia, abuse of children. He is the victor over exploitation of the poor, over the mindless blighting of God's good earth, over the madness of military spending and nuclear weapons.

But we may ask: If Christ already has the victory over such things, why are they so much in evidence? Why do they seem to have such encompassing dominion? In a war there may be one decisive battle that determines which side will win. Because of that battle the one side is sure to go on to complete triumph, even though the other side still has troops in the field and the struggle continues. It's only a matter of time until that side is utterly vanquished. When we look to Jesus Christ, executed on a Roman cross and risen from a rock-hewn tomb, we put our trust in the One through whom all the powers of darkness have been defeated. Their grip on humanity has been broken. It is just a matter of time until they will be totally vanquished and swept from the field.

Our hope as Christians does not have to do first of all with gaining eternal life after death. The towering hope given in the New Testament is that God's glorious kingdom will come, the invisible risen Lord will appear in splendor to recreate all that God has made, everything evil and destructive will be done away with. That is, history will turn out right. The human story will receive its God-given ending. God at some point will take total control of the stream of human events and bring in the unimaginable wonder of the New Age. We hope in God for the fulfillment of all that God has promised, and, quite secondarily, we hope to have our own tiny part in that, for all eternity.

One friend who asked to pray with me for my healing was very insistent that I must have "100 percent faith" that God would heal me completely and if I did, that healing would certainly come. I was grateful for her concern and prayer, but I can't agree with that approach. In that view, we have the determining role: If we can reach such a degree of certainty, this brings God's healing. It can become almost like a magic formula that gives us control.

WE HOPE IN GOD FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF ALL THAT GOD HAS PROMISED, AND, QUITE SECONDARILY, WE HOPE TO HAVE OUR OWN TINY PART IN THAT, FOR ALL ETERNITY.

In contrast, a key passage for me has been the story in Mark 1:40-45. "A leper came to [Jesus] beseeching him, and kneeling said to him, 'If you will, you can make me clean.'" The leper had strong faith that Jesus could heal him, but he was not supposing that his faith would automatically induce Jesus to perform such a healing. The leper saw Jesus as the One who would freely and graciously decide whether to give healing. We read: "Moved with pity, [Jesus] stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I will; be clean.' And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean."

A number of best-selling books about healing have been published that have a message something like this: Have positive thoughts, picture your illness as eliminated, be confident you're going to be healed, and the chances are very good that you will be. I think there is some truth in this approach. The outlook of a sick person certainly is important. But the popular literature gives it the central role. The idea is that we ourselves have that positive power to bring healing for ourselves.

But biblical faith is basically different from such a view. If as Christians we grope toward healing, we recognize that God has the central role. Our part is quite significant, and God makes use of it. However, we look to God for healing, and not to the power of positive thoughts that we evoke within ourselves.

Another key passage for me has been the one in Mark 5:24b-34 in which the woman, coming through the dense crowd, touched the garment of Jesus, and healing power flowed into her. I want to be in touch with Jesus so that power from him can flow into me for healing or for coping with whatever comes.

God has given me a measure of healing, and we rejoice in that. God may give me or any stricken person full healing from a deadly disease, and that is cause for yet greater rejoicing. But when God does not and the agent of death sooner or later seems to win out, we can still rejoice. For death's triumph is swallowed up in Christ's victory. At some point each of us is given over to death, but that infernal grip cannot hold us. God lifts us out of it to be with our risen Lord.

When we found out that I might have only a few weeks to live, there came the urgent question of priorities. What was important enough to give time to? My pattern of reading shifted. As for the daily newspaper, I would look at the headlines and check the weather. Time seemed too precious for more than that. We didn't have the television on for maybe three months. I read the cards

During Holy Week of 1997, *midway through chemotherapy, Dale Aukerman oversaw the planting of more than 300 trees in his meadow.*

and letters from friends, but very little else that came in the mail. Reading the Bible was what seemed so crucially important.

God speaks to us in many ways. For me the most personal and vital way is through the words of scripture. It is sometimes said that a verse in one's devotional reading can jump out at a person to be God's "marching orders for the day." Continually during the past months I've been given such verses. These messages from God are a decisive help when we are cornered by death, but we need them so much also in what seem less critical times.

I have kept returning to verses having to do with fear. It has many ways of getting a hold on us, even through lesser threats. God's word is given in Isaiah 41:10: "Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God." Jesus, walking on the water, said to the trembling disciples in the boat (and to me): "Take heart, it is I; have no fear" (Matt. 14:27). The risen Christ speaks in Revelation 1:17-18: "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades." Even if death comes close to stalk us or a loved one, we don't have to be afraid. The Lord is risen indeed. He has defeated death and will soon put an end to it.

Throughout my adult life I have been much involved in peace witness and peacemaking. During these past months I've cherished verses about peace. Isaiah 26:3 gives the promise: "Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee." The risen Lord said to the fearful disciples in the upper room: "Peace be with you" (John 20:20, 21). As I was being thrust in and out of the MRI tunnel, I would think of the verse "the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). This peace, in the biblical understanding, is more than inner tranquility of spirit. It is wholeness of life and relationships given by God over against all that fragments and destroys. God's gift of peace can bear us up even when we walk through the valley of deep darkness.

Other verses that have stood out and accompanied me have to do with rejoicing. Psalm 70:4 gives the appeal: "May all who seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee." Jesus said to his despairing followers in the upper room, shortly before his arrest: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11). Paul gave the exhortation: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice" (Phil. 4:4).

AT SOME POINT EACH OF US IS GIVEN OVER TO DEATH, BUT THAT INFERNAL GRIP CANNOT HOLD US.

When my sister Jane died, we who were closest to her were grief-stricken. But there was something in us stronger than that. We could rejoice because Jesus raised from the dead had changed everything for us and for all humanity. Our experience was that of the Easter hymn:

Lo! Jesus meets us.
Risen from the tomb,
Lovingly he greets us,
Scatters fear and gloom.

I talked in Bridgewater, Va., with William Beahm, retired dean of Bethany Seminary, a little before he died of prostate cancer. One thing he said was, "Be thankful when your plumbing works." There is so much we take for granted and don't give thanks for. He also said, "Death is as close as the truck in the oncoming lane of traffic." I think he meant: Ordinarily the huge semi in the oncoming lane goes on by; but something can happen, and there is a head-on collision. The possibility of death is that close, and none of us knows when for us the possibility will become the actual thing.

We are given these years of life on earth as testing and preparation within God's scrutinizing view. Each day is precious. Don't waste time. Keep examining your priorities. Cherish your loved ones and hug them often. Feed on God's word and take with you each day words that spring out at you as God's special promise or command. In times that aren't so hard give God your deepest attention, and when the hardest times come, God will be right there with you.

Take heart. Fear not. Rejoice in the Lord. "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Dale Aukerman, a writer, preacher, and peace advocate, lives near Union Bridge, Md.

Family reunion in Di Linh

How I found my lost cousin, Ted Studebaker

This cousin I never knew embodied the ideal lifestyle. I even wrote about him for one of my college essays on who has been the foremost hero in my life. So I was elated when I heard that there was going to be a class traveling to Vietnam. One aspect of the 26-person trip was to visit Di Linh, in hopes of finding something of my cousin Ted Studebaker's life and death there.

BY JOEL ULRICH

I want to understand war. Everyone talks about it. It seems like a phenomenon that destroys so many people's lives and leaves nothing in its place.

But war is a funny concept for young people in the United States under the age of 23, such as me. We have never directly experienced it. All my generation has are books, movies, pictures, and stories of those who have gone through war in the past. This has created a major conflict that plagues my consciousness. If I cannot understand global war, how can I possibly fathom global peace?

One such story of peace and war, with which many within the Church of the Brethren are familiar, is the life of Ted Studebaker. Ted, a graduate of Manchester College, declared himself a conscientious objector to the war in Vietnam. He had no hesitation, however, to entering South Vietnam in April 1969 as a participant in Vietnam Christian Service (VCS).

Ted chose VCS because of its service-oriented nature, a logical extension of his Church of the Brethren background. He worked in the village of Di Linh (pronounced Z Lin) with Koho refugees who had been displaced from the mountains. He worked to increase their rice efficiency, introduced fertilizers, helped establish an agricultural cooperative, and built chicken coops in bathtubs.

The old French hunting lodge *where Ted Studebaker and other VCS volunteers had lived is now a restaurant. Ted's room was on the lower right corner.*

For an American he had a wonderful rapport with the tribal people.

After his two-year term was completed, he decided to stay another year.

Khai Tran Van explains the circumstances *of the night that he saw Ted Studebaker on the floor of his room in the hunting lodge after being killed by the Viet Cong.*

He married another VCS volunteer from Hong Kong named Lee Ven Pak in a church in Di Linh, the service conducted in the Koho language. They had been married only a week when Ted was killed in the lodge where he lived by a Viet Cong insurrection. The Viet Cong were nationalist guerrilla groups fighting in South Vietnam against the government. Ted was, after all, an American, or "enemy," living among the local people.

Ted has special significance to me. He was my mother's second cousin (my great grandfather was the brother of Ted's father), and it would be hard to get through a Thanksgiving dinner at my grandparents' home in New Carlisle, Ohio, without mentioning something about Ted and the role that he represented: practicing nonviolence in the midst of violence. This cousin I never knew embodied the ideal lifestyle. I even wrote about Ted for one of my college essays on who has been the foremost hero in my life. And of course my book collection has a worn copy of the children's story by Joy Moore about the life of Ted Studebaker.

So I was elated when I heard that there was going to be a three-week class traveling to Vietnam in January, jointly sponsored by the University of La Verne and Manchester College, examining the American war in Vietnam from the Vietnamese perspective. One aspect of our 26-person trip was to visit Di Linh, in hopes of finding something of Ted's life and death there.

Then I found out that my wonderful cousin, Nick Studebaker, now a student at Manchester College, was also going. The new generation of family was seeking out the old. I wanted Ted Studebaker to help me understand what war is. What it is like to die. And what peace is.

I arrived at Di Linh with very little expectation of recovering anything substantial. We didn't know how to get to the lodge where he had stayed. We received word from someone who had visited Di Linh a few years back that the town was very different now from what it had been in the 1970s.

Indeed, town landscape in Vietnam has drastically changed since the late 1980s when Vietnam moved to a market economy while retaining its Communist one-party rule. Moreover it has been only four years since the United States completely waived its trade embargo against Vietnam, a country which was then and still is today one of the poorest in the world.

So with the advent of the change to the market economy, roadside stands selling everything from rice to paint brushes to helicopters made out of Coca Cola cans are pervasive. We had been told that a market now existed in place of the old French hunting lodge where Ted had stayed.

Other things made it unlikely that we would find any trace of Ted's history. For some reason, everyone had thought someone else would bring a picture of Ted, so we ended up with no photo to show people. We also didn't know his Vietnamese name. They probably didn't call him Ted, but rather some Vietnamese derivative. It may even have been a name in the Koho language. After all, everyone he lived and worked with were Koho refugees who were no longer living in Di Linh but had now returned to the mountains.

I envisioned our group arriving in Di Linh, getting out of the bus, taking pictures of some random street, and saying, "Here is Di Linh. This is where Ted Studebaker lived and died." Then back on the bus and on we'd go.

We did have one lead: The hunting lodge was supposed to have stood about a hundred feet away from a church in the middle of the village, the same church where Ted and Ven Pak were married. So when we finally entered Di Linh, we stopped at a seemingly random church that we saw from our bus windows. Our guide, Hoang, got out of the bus, walked into the church, and we all waited in the bus in quiet fervor. After about 10 minutes, she came back with a small, old man who worked in the church.

"We got lucky!" Hoang exclaimed. She introduced us to Khai Tran Van (called Mr. Khai by our guide), who was a former radio operator for the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), or the south government's military. Speaking in broken English,

Joel Ulrich *(far left)* **and Nick Studebaker** *(far right) met two men who had known and worked with Ted Studebaker—Khai Tran Van (left). and K'rah Kaning (right).*

Mr. Khai told us that he had been asked by the AVRN to verify and document the murder of Ted Studebaker by the Viet Cong! Not only that, but he said that the old hunting lodge was indeed standing.

In a rural village it would be unusual to see close to 30 white people just walking down the street with cameras flashing, and for that reason he was worried that a large group of us might attract authorities. So he said that he would take only a few of us to see the lodge. It ended up that Nick; our guide; Randy Miller, a professor of photojournalism from La Verne; and I left the bus to walk down the street with Mr. Khai.

The hunting lodge, a two-story building on the slope of a hill, was now a family-owned restaurant. Out of a sense of obligation and respect, we all ordered some soft drinks and bottled water. After about 10 minutes, Mr. Khai asked the owner if we could see the rooms downstairs. The five of us went down, and Mr. Khai took us into a room in the left corner by the door. He then proceeded to point to different, now imaginary, parts of the room. "There was a bed here, in the corner."

When Mr. Khai had arrived that night, he saw Ted on the floor by the bed, unmoving. Ted's wife, Ven Pak, was lying beside him. At first Mr. Khai thought they were both dead, but in truth Ven Pak was just in complete shock from what had occurred and was holding Ted as hard as she could.

About 10 other officials were in the room, and there was blood all over the floor. Mr. Khai said that the "VC (Viet Cong) thought that Ted was CIA." They were afraid that he was an American spy and were nervous about how Ted was helping the Koho people.

The room had changed a lot. There was no longer any bed in the corner—just a few chairs and a pool table, which overpowered the room. The walls were littered with posters of beautiful European-looking women holding Tiger and Carlsburg beers in their hands. Things change in 30 years. But we got lucky, indeed.

While Mr. Khai had not known Ted personally, he knew an older Koho man in Di Linh who worked for the VCS with Ted. We walked down the street and met K'rah Kaning. "You are the cousins of Ted?" he exclaimed. Family relations are quite important in Vietnam, and both Mr. Khai and Mr. K'rah were very honored that two of Ted's cousins would come back to Di Linh to see where he lived.

Mr. K'rah had been a driver and translator for people in VCS who could not speak Vietnamese or Koho languages, although he commented that Ted could speak both quite well. They simply called him by his name, "Ted." He said that "Ted taught them to improve their lives ... their health care ... and how to have a good life. People loved him very much. The Koho people will always remember him, always remember the things he did for them."

Nick and I exchanged addresses with the two men. We took a Polaroid picture of the four of us and gave each of them a copy. I climbed back onto the bus, a little dazed from the experience. I hadn't expected this.

I realize now that as this account unfolded of how a relative of mine was shot to death in the very room in which I was standing, I had felt peaceful. Something about it seemed right. Not his death, of course, but the lifestyle that Ted had lived in this village, and the comments that we heard the men tell us about his life. Ted was speaking to Nick and me through these two men. "You can live a life like this," he was telling us. "I did."

I hope to never truly understand war and peace in the same manner as my cousin Ted Studebaker did. After this journey, though, I am confident that I can contribute something in my own way to the issue of war and peace. My generation and I prove that it is possible to go through life without being in a war. War is not an inevitable part of human history.

I left a little notebook-paper message for Ted on the floor where he died. I told him not to worry, that a new generation of social activists was continuing his work by following the example that he, and Jesus, and all other followers of nonviolence have set. Can we meet the standards that they have set for us? Or more importantly, do we dare try? As Ted ended all his letters ... "Life is great. Yea!" *M.*

Joel Ulrich is a sophomore majoring in political science and Latin American development at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn. He is a member of York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill.

Roots in Vietnam

BY BRIAN HARTZ

Madalyn Metzger, a junior at Manchester College and a Brethren from Springfield, Ill., went to Vietnam in January with a class on ethical decision-making and earned credit in intercultural communication.

But for her the trip was mostly a journey of self-discovery, to the land where her mother was born, and where her mother met the Indiana Brethren man who would become her father.

Metzger currently has only distant relatives living in Vietnam, but her mother, after being orphaned, lived there for many years before moving to the United States. Madalyn's parents, Dennis and Van Metzger, are active members of First Church of the Brethren, Springfield, Ill.

Metzger's father, a native of North Manchester, Ind., and graduate of Manchester College, worked in Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) in Vietnam during the war, eventually meeting Metzger's mother, Van.

An emotional highlight of the trip came when she was able to locate the house in the village of Tam Ky where her father lived during his time in Vietnam, a house that she had heard of, but never seen. "I never thought I'd go to Vietnam, let alone find the house where my father lived and worked," Metzger said. "That was a very emotional moment for me, to know that my parents had been there long ago, and that I was returning to it—it was a reunion of sorts, and very moving."

However, other moments of the trip proved to be more emotionally disturbing, such as the old bomb craters that scar the countryside and the charred remnants of burned villages and buildings. "Flying over the land made the destruction very obvious," Metzger said. "B-52 craters still dot the landscape, but the farmers have been creative in working around the destruction. They often use the old bomb craters as ponds for irrigation."

In studying the destruction and devastation caused by the war, Metzger was able to learn many lessons from this dark and tragic time in human history. "Vietnam didn't want to fight, and they didn't want the US there," Metzger said. "However, the people of Vietnam do not dwell in the past. Almost half the population is under 25, so for most of them the war is part of history and nothing else. They are moving on and moving forward. Things are getting better." But at the same time Vietnam is becoming more westernized, which in the opinion of Metzger and many others, "isn't always a good thing."

Metzger insists that the Vietnamese do not hold many grudges. "The Vietnamese are a very forgiving people," Metzger said. "But the scars and wounds of war are still very apparent."

Indeed, the group was reminded on numerous occasions of the atrocities that occurred during the war in Vietnam. "We visited the site of the My Lai massacre, which was a very somber and sobering experience," Metzger said. My Lai was the site of a notorious and vicious massacre of innocent Vietnamese civilians, including women and children, by American soldiers.

This massacre, along with the destruction caused by the Tet Offensive, were two of the events that led to the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam.

The class also visited the war crimes museum dedicated to the victims of the mass destruction and death caused by the war. "A lot of people couldn't handle it, although some did," Metzger said. "Emotionally, it was very difficult for me to deal with the horrors of the war that I saw [at the museum]. It really spoke about our inability to learn from past mistakes, since atrocities such as these are still occurring today, around the world."

Madalyn Metzger *with an orphan in Da Nang, Vietnam.*

For Metzger, visiting the small villages and interacting with the people directly was an unforgettable experience. "I really loved going to the villages, especially the ones that weren't used to having Westerners around," Metzger said. "It was like an entire village spectacle—all the people would come out, the kids would all try to talk to you, the adults would all smile and ask where we were from, how old we were, and why we were here." Metzger said it was especially pleasing to be able to converse using some basic Vietnamese phrases she learned from her parents. "Their faces would just light up."

Brian Hartz is editor in chief of Oak Leaves, *the Manchester College newspaper where this article first appeared.*

PUERTO RICO *blessings*

BY MARY SUE ROSENBERGER

"...Te alabamos, Señor."
"Por este pan, por este don, Te alabamos, Te alabamos.
Por este pan, por este don, Te alabamos, Señor."

"For this bread, for this gift, we praise you, we praise you.
For this bread, for this gift, we praise you, Lord."

This simple little Spanish-language table grace blessed many of the simple little meals shared together by the first Senior Adult Workcamp in Puerto Rico, January 8-19. Sixteen work campers—tall and short, women and men, black and white, clergy and lay, Spanish-fluent and linguistically challenged, employed and retired, married and single—all learned to praise God in Spanish for the gift of food. But food was only one of the many gifts God showered upon this hardy group of senior pioneers.

There was also the gift of *community*. From the moment our group met, it was apparent that the Association of Brethren Caregivers had gathered together a unique bunch of hardy souls for this Caribbean adventure. As the week progressed, the special gifts of each person were called into service: The Arnolds of Berne, Ind.—Edith, a quiet and hard-working gardener and Homer, a zealous ditch-digger. The Bollingers of Goshen, Ind.—John, a master joke teller and apprentice cement mixer and Jolene, world-record holder for number of insect bites on the legs. The Corys of North Manchester, Ind.—Martha, a preacher with laryngitis and Norman, an antique machine wizard. Bill Jackson of New Lebanon, Ohio—friendly giant, harmless to all except buried water lines. Ron McAdams, Tipp City, Ohio—retired computer whiz turned preacher and apprentice block layer. The Petrys of Lakemore, Ohio—Alice, with world-class adjustability, and Larry, jack-of-all-trades and master of most. The Rosenbergers of Greenville, Ohio—Bruce, organizer, chauffeur, communicator, and Mary Sue, official map-reader and historian. The Sanblooms of Brookston, Ind.—Heifer Project International veterans, Bob, first-class cement-mixer and Joann, gardener par excellence. Beulah Shisler of Lansdale, Pa.—quiet, hard-working competition to the Energizer Bunny; and Marilyn Yohn, of Elgin, Ill.—willing, generous, and wide-eyed as a first-time traveler abroad. Diverse gifts, essential skills, all bound together in the gift of community. "We thank you, Lord."

Steve Mason

Workcamp participants *Alice Petry and Bill Jackson work with Puerto Rican contractor Abel Pagán to prepare for the rebuilding of a concrete wall for Yahuecas Church of the Brethren's new kitchen.*

The gift of *sharing*. This ABC adventure was publicized by the Older Adult Ministries Cabinet as a "workcamp," and, indeed, it was a *work*camp. For five days, these hardy seniors—most of them retired—returned to work, really hard work! Preparing rocky soil, landscaping, designing and laying a gravel walkway, digging a trench, mixing and pouring a concrete base under the perimeter fence, tearing down and rebuilding concrete block walls for a new kitchen—these were the tasks undertaken by these stalwart seniors. Hands unaccustomed to a machete learned to clear brush with it. Arms that had never used a pickax managed to use it to loosen the hard, rocky soil. Preachers dug trenches, planted shrubs, and laid concrete block. A retired government employee and an ex-insurance salesman both became adept at

Iglesia Hermanos
CRISTO NUESTRA

Older adults working *alongside members from several Puerto Rican Church of the Brethren congregations include (first row, left to right) Marilyn Yohn, Alice and Larry Petry, Jolene Bollinger, Jorge and Norma Rivera, Abel Pagán; (second row) Edith Arnold, John Bollinger, Bruce and Mary Sue Rosenberger, Martha and Norman Cory, Ron McAdams, Joann Sanbloom, Beulah Shishler, José Ostolaza and Jorge Rivera, Jr.; (third row) Bill Jackson, Homer Arnold, and Bob Sanbloom.*

mixing concrete. An accountant, now retired, wielded a sledgehammer with enough force and persistence that she broke down two concrete posts. As one participant observed, "Nobody could pay me enough to make me work this hard!"

But it was work shared with the Yahuecas Church of the Brethren. Each day, pastor Jorge Rivera was available to encourage, to assist in purchase of needed supplies, and to keep the group supplied with work. Abel Pagán and José Ostolaza, congregational leaders, worked with the group daily, supervising and helping insure that the finished projects would meet the needs of the congregation. Angel and young Jorge, nephew and son of the pastor, came each day to help with the work and to translate when needed. Norma Rivera, wife of Jorge and co-pastor of the congregation, had organized the women of the congregation to provide the noon meal for the work campers. Rice and beans, roast chicken or pork, mashed potatoes or salads, fried bananas and fresh pineapple, guava or rice pudding made the group think each day of the Hispanic tradition of "siesta hour," but the Brethren work ethic prevailed. What a gift to see the whole experience emerge as each shared according to their ability. "We thank you, Lord."

God's gift of *beauty* was everywhere apparent, in places and in people. Puerto Rico is *La Isla del Encanto* (The Isle of Enchantment). Walking one of its many beaches at sunrise, the sudden splendor of a mountain view, the feel of the cool mysterious tropical forest, the taste of freshly picked citrus, the nighttime sound of the cheerful coquis: these are just a few of the reasons why that title is more than just tourist propaganda. In six days of sightseeing around the island, the senior adult work campers also came under the spell of this tiny (100 miles by 37 miles) Caribbean garden spot.

Like most tourists to Puerto Rico, the group visited the fortress at El Morro and the old city of San Juan, and enjoyed fresh seafood at fine restaurants on both the Atlantic and Caribbean coasts. But most tourists miss a special gift of beauty the group enjoyed: the work of the Holy Spirit in the people and congregations of the Church of the Brethren in Puerto Rico. La Iglesia de los Hermanos on that island has traded stately hymns for praise choruses, exchanged organs for rhythm instruments, and makes up in enthusiasm for what it may lack in theological training. But the Church of the Brethren is alive and well in Puerto Rico in the mission and ministries of people such as Juan and Isabel Figueroa at the Caimito Christian Community Center, Oscar and Millie Villanueva at Getsemani church, Fausto and Juanita Carrasco at Rio Prieto church, Irma Zayas as district minister for the island churches, the lay leadership of the Castañer church who currently direct worship in the absence of a pastor, and Jorge and Norma Rivera at Yahuecas church. What a beautiful gift to worship with these Brethren. "Te alabamos, Señor."

The gift of *God's care* sustained the group in safe travel on mountain roads that seem to have been built for jeeps or horses. God's care gifted us in our working without injuries more serious than "tourista" (traveler's diarrhea), a bee sting, sunburn, and multiple insect bites. And the gift of God's care surrounded us in the prayer support offered to each of the work campers—and their home congregations—by the Puerto Rican Brethren. "Te alabamos, Señor."

The seniors who accepted the challenge of a work camp in Puerto Rico received many gifts for which to thank God. Each received gifts of community, sharing, beauty, God's care. There were also gifts of *discovery*. We went to Puerto Rico to give, but we received. We went to work, but we had fun. We went to bless, but were blessed instead. Some of us were startled by difference, but we all discovered unity. At times we were frustrated by language, but we learned to communicate. We went to a "faraway place," but found a second home. "For all these gifts, we praise you, Lord." M.

Mary Sue Rosenberger is a chaplain at The Brethren's Home Retirement Community in Greenville, Ohio. She is past president of the Association of Brethren Caregivers and, in 1965, served three months as a volunteer nurse at Hospital Castañer in Puerto Rico.

Letters

> *"I am encouraged that there are more sisters and brothers who are modeling and calling us to make central and utmost our passion for Jesus Christ and learning to be more graciously inclusive as in a family."*

Church of Brothers & Sisters

How are we held together as the Church of the Brethren? And how are we to move on together?

We need more than celebrating diversity in a shallow, pluralistic coexistence.

I am encouraged that there are more sisters and brothers who are modeling and calling us to make central and utmost our passion for Jesus Christ and learning to be more graciously inclusive as in a family. May their kind and spirit increase abundantly.

There are some of us who still tend to be critical of others who are not part of our group, just as some of the early disciples who reported to Jesus that they tried to hinder someone who was casting out demons in Jesus' name because they were not part of their group. But Jesus encouraged them to be more inclusive (Mark 9:38-41).

We need a fire as dynamic as the New Testament struggles that came to be inclusive of Samaritans and Gentiles. Some steps may be as simple as a new name, such as Church of Brothers and Sisters. This connects simply with our history and also more accurately communicates to our age who we are. Furthermore I suggest we leave out "the" in order to be intentionally more inclusive.

Other steps will be more courageous in affirming vision and mission and dealing with exclusiveness in our family. A respectful, holy tension will probably always be needed and healthy in some areas. However we need to watch out for political and power plays that castigate or seek to cut off other groups. The way we can walk together is humbly in love and being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3).

Roger W. Eberly
Milford, Ind.

Make plans now to attend the

MESSENGER DINNER

at Annual Conference

Sights, sounds, & stories from southern Sudan

July 2, 1998, Orlando, Florida

David R. Radcliff, director of Brethren Witness, delivers a multimedia report from the recent delegation visit to Sudan. Learn about the inspiring faith of Sudanese Christians and the new Brethren efforts to build a Partnership for Peace.

For dinner tickets, call the Annual Conference office at (800) 323-8039 or order from advance packet order form. Tickets also available in Orlando at Annual Conference ticket sales.

Putting the C back in YMCA

Like many communities, our town recently celebrated YMCA Sunday. This is every YMCA's annual opportunity to tell the communities they serve about the YMCA mission and ministry, without any pressure on either side to discuss programs or membership.

In the course of my travels to local churches to discuss the upcoming celebration, I repeatedly heard about the lack of "C" (Christianity) in today's YMCA. Fortunately, our local YMCA does not lack mission or ministry to our community, but we do lack sufficient communication to educate others as to the services YMCAs provide to those in need, about our collaborations with other local human services agencies, and cooperative efforts with area churches.

If your Church of the Brethren congregation would appreciate an opportunity to increase their own local outreach ministry, I strongly suggest that you contact your local YMCA. Also consider calling a church member to serve on the YMCA board of directors. There are, no doubt, YMCAs that were hard-pressed to find ways to celebrate the "C" in their YMCA. Let me assure you, it is an obligation, not an option. And perhaps your congregation can help find ways to put the Christianity back.

As the Church of the Brethren and YMCAs alike experience budget cuts like the rest of business America, we should all be reminded of, and seek out the many opportunities for "continuing the work of Jesus... peacefully, simply, together"...not just within our denomination, but within our world.

Jackie Kallal
Penn Run Church of the Brethren
Penn Run, Pa.

MESSENGER or the message?

We are writing to you from the deacon board of the Berkey Church of the Brethren at Windber, Pa., to address an article about the Womaens Caucus and the Brethren Mennonite Council for Gay and Lesbian Concerns that was printed in the August/September issue [see "Over 200 'wade on in' to this year's 'Dancing' conference"]. We feel the article should not have been included in MESSENGER. This issue was covered as an overview of our Annual Conference held in Long Beach. This event was not held during Conference, nor was it held at the Conference site. Thankfully, it was not any part of the Annual Conference, and we feel it should not have been printed as part of the issue.

We were deeply concerned as to the contents of the article, which highlighted the topic "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Still Christian." As a deacon board of the Church of the Brethren, we earnestly feel the Bible clearly prints the sins of a sexual nature, such as homosexual tendencies, bisexual, or lesbian sexual preferences as a sin. The Bible offers many scriptures against such lifestyles.

We are sad and concerned that our Brethren choose to accept this as an alternative lifestyle, when the Bible is so clear to call a sin a sin. As we discussed this topic, we prayed and reflected on the sin in our own lives. We feel the Lord directs us to lift each other up in prayer.

We will continue to keep the Church of the Brethren, as a whole, in our prayers. We feel the world is pressing Christians to conform and accept ideas that we clearly read in the Bible to be wrong. We base our feelings on the word of God. We struggle with the many arrows Satan throws at each of us. We are confident that prayer is the weapon God gave us to fight Satan and his ways.

We will continue to pray for the staff of the MESSENGER and the choices it makes in the Brethren publication.

Deacon Board
Berkey Church of the Brethren
Windber, Pa.

The anointed

Today, with great courage, our pastor, Jimmy Ross, stood before the congregation and, as his morning sermon, recited his experience with the anointing, cancer, and depression. He cleared the air with a masterful explanation of the chain of events and the role of the anointing, prayer, love and commitment of family, loved ones, and the church played in his recovery.

There were those—and, I confess, I among them—who questioned his faith as the failure of the anointing. How could he suffer from depression after being anointed? We were thinking he must be feeling guilty for lack of faith.

How welcome was his message as he brought a new insight into the anointing and its role in the management of serious medical conditions such as clinical depression. Surely faith in God and the anointing should prevent and relieve simple depression, as it is the result of simple loss of faith in things. Clinical depression is another matter altogether. It is a serious illness that can strike anyone without reason and requires a complex medical/psychological program for recovery.

Faith in God, and the reinforcement of one's faith with the anointing service, can be a significant factor in speeding the recovery. Seeing Jimmy today and hearing his explanation of events, I am sure the anointing, and his firm faith, played a very significant role in his speedy recovery. We thank God for such a good pastor, and we pray that he may have continued good health.

Franklin K. Cassel
Brethren Village, Lancaster, Pa.

(Jimmy Ross, pastor of the Lititz Church of the Brethren, was moderator-elect of Annual Conference when he was discovered to have cancer of the prostate. He was anointed, had successful surgery, but developed severe clinical depression that resulted in his having to resign his moderatorship.)

CHECK OUT ARIZONA!

Community Church of the Brethren
111 N. Sun Valley Boulevard
Mesa, AZ 85207 (602) 357-9811
Sunday Services 10:15 AM

Glendale Church of the Brethren
7238 N. 61st Avenue
Glendale, AZ 85301 (602) 937-9131
Sunday Services 10:30 AM

Phoenix First Church of the Brethren
3609 N. 27th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85016 (602) 955-8537
Sunday Services 10:45AM

Tucson Church of the Brethren
2200 North Dodge Boulevard
Tucson, AZ 85716 (520) 327-5106
Sunday Services 10:30 AM

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Where are theologians?

Where are the Brethren theologians? As a reader of MESSENGER, and member of the Church of the Brethren for many years, I feel compelled to ask this question. While there is no lack of articles regarding what might be called "social gospel," it is difficult to recall any articles dealing with the continuing development of theology. For this information, one must turn to writers representing other religious groups. Certainly there must be Brethren scholars who are studying the continuing analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls, or the efforts to rediscover "Q". It would be interesting to read articles on these, and other areas of modern theology, written from a Brethren perspective.

Robert E. Fletcher
Denton, Md.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer opportunities abound for the **New Windsor Conference Center** located at the lovely, historic Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. The Center is in a peaceful, rural, treed setting with the theme of "A quiet place to get things done," but is also convenient to Baltimore & Washington, D.C., for ease of travel & sightseeing opportunities. We need volunteer hostesses/hosts to help coordinate/provide hospitality & conference services to a variety of guests. Maturity & detail orientation needed along with outgoing personality & genuine interest in providing excellent customer service. Furnished apartment & meals provided during period of service. For more info., call or write Hospitality Coordinator, Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776-0188. (800) 766-1553 (toll-free).

Please note: this ad originated by, and partially funded, through the generous caring of a current volunteer hostess and host.

Judas, we, and they

I am writing to you concerning the article "The church is we rather than they" in the January/February MESSENGER. This article has to do with the editor's interview with Moderator Elaine Sollenberger.

I was taken aback when I read in your discussion with Elaine about who gets the call. She believes, at least that is what is insinuated, that Jesus made a mistake when he called Judas (or was that the editor's comment?). I quote: "She agrees that mistakes could be made. Jesus called Judas after all." End of quote.

That suggests to me that our God is not omniscient and that He is not sovereign. John 6:70: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil." Acts 1:25: "From which Judas, by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

Could this be the reason why you continue to hear of the "we" and the "they" in our denomination?

Merv Keller, pastor
Lewiston, Maine

Assisting the lame

Do we assist those who are lame? Almost three years ago, I was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease. Since that time I have deteriorated to a point where it is quite difficult for me to walk or use my hands. I must now use two sturdy crutches to get around. Yet during this ordeal, my eyes have been opened to a new window on the world. People do generously reach out and assist the lame. We have, indeed, listened to His words.

During this episode of my life, I have been enriched by the kindness of those who saw that I had difficulty in carrying out life's daily activities. I got in line at a crowded fast-food restaurant. Before I turned to pick up my tray, two men whom I had never met before rushed over, almost competing as to which one would help me carry my tray. I have experienced many other examples of kindness.

I believe that Jesus' lesson on serving the lame has taken hold. In Luke 14:12-14 Jesus said "...when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed." Jesus is saying that we will be blessed when we assist those who are lame.

C. George Tulli Jr.
West Richmond Church of the Brethren
Richmond, Va.

From the Office of Human Resources

Kulp Bible College, Nigeria
Teacher, Begin mid-1998

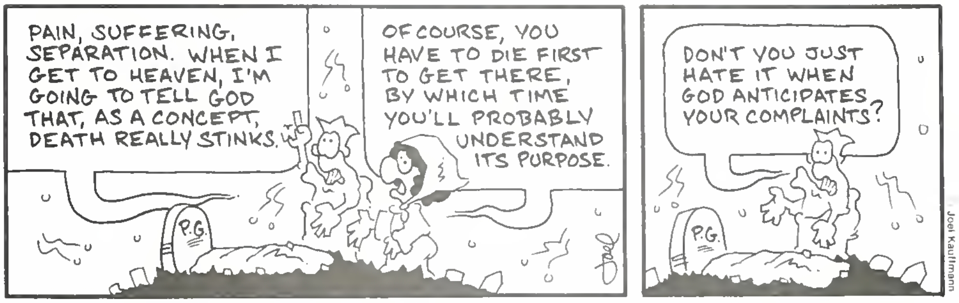
Are you sensing God's call to ministry in Africa?

A seminary-trained instructor is needed for this important church leadership development institution in Nigeria.

For more information call
Mervin Keeney,
Africa/Middle East Representative
1-800-323-8039

Pontius' Puddle

Send payment for reprinting "Pontius' Puddle" from MESSENGER *to Joel Kauffmann, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN 46526. $25 for one time use. $10 for second strip in same issue. $10 for congregations.*


PAIN, SUFFERING, SEPARATION. WHEN I GET TO HEAVEN, I'M GOING TO TELL GOD THAT, AS A CONCEPT, DEATH REALLY STINKS.
P.G.
OF COURSE, YOU HAVE TO DIE FIRST TO GET THERE, BY WHICH TIME YOU'LL PROBABLY UNDERSTAND ITS PURPOSE.
Joel
DON'T YOU JUST HATE IT WHEN GOD ANTICIPATES YOUR COMPLAINTS?
P.G.
Joel Kauffmann

Classified Ads

DIABETICS SERVICE

Diabetics: If you have Medicare or insurance, you could be eligible to receive your diabetic supplies at no cost. (Insulin-dependent only.) Call (800) 337-4144.

DOCTORS NEEDED

Volunteer doctors needed at mission hospital in India. Contact Ramesh C. Patel, Brethren Mission Hospital, Dahanu Road, Dist. Thane, Maharashtra, 401602, INDIA.

INVITATION

Cincinnati Church of the Brethren fellowship meets for worship & support in n.e. area of Cincinnati. We welcome others to join us or bring needs to our attention. Contact us c/o Cincinnati Friends Meeting House, 8075 Keller Rd., Indian Hill, OH 45243. Tel. (513) 956-7733.

Come worship in the Valley of the Sun with Community Church of the Brethren at 111 N. Sunvalley Blvd., Mesa, AZ 86207. Mail to: 8343 E. Emelita Ave., Mesa, AZ 85208. Tel. (602) 357-9811.

TRAVEL

Annual Conference. Travel with us in air-conditioned coach through the Shenandoah Valley to Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla. Included will be visits to Atlanta, Savannah, EPCOT, and Kennedy Space Center. Please write to J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

Oberammergau Passion Play and tour of Europe in 2000. One tour (July 31-Aug. 27) is completely filled. Reservations now being accepted for June 26-July 17 and July 17-31, 2000 tours. Tours will include Paris, the Swiss Alps, Venice, Vienna, Prague, Berlin, Schwarzenau, and many other places. For info., write J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

Cruise the waterways of Russia from Moscow to St. Petersburg. The tour (14 days) leaves Washington, D.C. (Dulles Intnl. Airport) on Sept. 4, 1998. An attractive price is available. For details contact the tour host, Dr. Wayne F. Geisert, President Emeritus, Box 40, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, VA 22812. Phone (540) 433-1433, or (540) 828-5494.

Travel with a Mission in Understanding People to People International delegation visiting Iceland and Greenland, Aug. 30 to Sept. 9, 1998. For info., contact delegation leader Enos B. Heisey, Member Board of Trustees, People to People International, 157 Stone Hedge Ct., Lebanon, PA 17042-7807 6. Tel. (717) 273-3093.

Visiting Japan? Why not stay at World Friendship Center in Hiroshima! Non-profit bed & breakfast staffed by BVS couple. Located within walking distance to Peace Park. Traditional Japanese style house. Very reasonable rates. Survivor stories and park guides available. For more info., call/fax Larry or Alice Petry (330) 733-2879, or contact WFC directly at: 8-10 Higashi Kanon-Machi, Nishi-ku, Hiroshima, JAPAN 733. Tel. 011-81-082-503-3191. Fax 011-81-082-503-3179.

WANTED

Color photo of rose window that was originally in west end of Quinter-Miller Auditorium at Camp Mack. Seek to purchase or borrow slide, negative, or print. Reply to Miriam Cable, 709 E. Northshore Dr., Syracuse, IN 46567-2140. Tel. (219) 457-2491. Fax c/o KeyBank, (219) 457-2483, att. Miriam Cable.

Turning Points

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation.

Akron, Ind.: Brad Shearer
Antioch, Rocky Mount, Va.: Ginny Brink, Mary White, Daniel White, Jim White, Libby Garst, Wesley Garst, David Vaden, Randy Lowman, April Lowman
Bassett, Va.: John Cassell, Jessica Helbert
Brook Park Community, Brook Park, Ohio: Lori Shook, Mike and Terry Shook, Kay Frederick
Champaign, Ill.: Shannon Davison, Barbara Agar
Charlottesville, Va.: Ray White
Christ the Servant, Cape Coral, Fla.: Mark and Jane Chidely, Scott Mason, Charlie and Dorie Bechtel, Eric and Julie Bechtel
Dayton, Va.: Louis Haynes, Ellis and Helen Harsh, Blaine and Stacie Simmers, Elaine Stroop, Chris and Karen Botkin, Sally Jane Conner, Pete and Carol Leddy
Detroit First, Harper Woods, Mich.: Phillip Ladouceur, Karen Ladouceur
Drexel Hill, Pa.: DiAngelo Louis, Jennifer Miller, Frank and Charlene Ryan
Dupont, Ohio: Mandy Bush, Shane Rhees, Eric Deken, Jimmy Wright, Anna Porter, Jenna Schulte, Andrea Elkins, Kendra Simindinger, Jenn Barth
Elizabethtown, Pa.: Patrick Dennehy, Terri Dennehy, Ralph Detrick, Joyce Stoltzfus, Sara Beth Detrick Stoltzfus, David Eller, Barbara Eller, Timothy Eller, Robert E. "Gene" Ellis, Barbara Ellis, Carol Tobias, Scott Trayer, Richelle Trayer, Paul Williams, Marie Williams
Ephrata, Pa.: Willie Camacho, Lorie Gibble, Wilbur and Florence Harley, Joel Horning, Lori Trievel, Anna Rose Schannauer
Everett, Pa.: Todd Wallace, Nancy Corbin
Eversole, New Lebanon, Ohio: Carol Reigel, Ron Moore, Robyn Moore, Matt Muncie, Matt Purcell
Germantown Brick, Rocky Mount, Va.: Jack and Arlene Brammer, Ron Cawley, Bill and Angela Corn
Glendale, Ariz.: Dawn Hunn, Bob and Julie Merrifield-Nelson
Green Tree, Oaks, Pa.: Carol-Joyce Anton, Ed Brown, Donna Brown, Jason Brown, Jeff Brown, Caitlin Clark, David Guzik, Bryan O'Neill, Brad Keller
Greenmount, Harrisonburg, Va.: Kathleen Davis, Denver Loan, Crystal Ott, Carrie Strawderman, Leslie Summers, Michele Shifflett, Douglas Myers Wenger, Cassia Campos Wenger, Ana Camila Campos Wenger, Jennifer Armstrong, Matthew Armstrong, Berlin Bible, Bonnie May, Helen Minnick, David and Lorna Nesselrodt, Kevin and Norma Nesselrodt, Mark and Kristen Reese, Dale and Ruth Ann Simmons
Hanover, Pa.: Clyde Weaver
Hollins Road, Roanoke, Va.: Stuart and Martha Kelly, Louise Harmon, Wayne and Merlene Merricks, Russell and Rachel Parrish, Lawrence Mundy, Gerald and Bonnie Philpott, Sandra Thompson
Laurel Glen, Cranesville, W. Va.:Eric Bishop, Gerry and Katy Bowser, Mary Ann Bolyard, Carrie Luckel, Ted McHold
Logansport, Ind.: Joshua Gibson
Long Green Valley, Glen Arm, Md.:Doreen Schafer, Kristen Bachelor, Liz Evans, Betty Rupp, Karl Huber, Sherry McGraw
Maple Grove, New Paris, Ind.: Darin Bernsert, Cody Lantz, Tara Snider
Marsh Creek, Gettysburg, Pa.: Joseph Pecaitis, Michelle Pecaitis
Mechanic Grove, Quarryville, Pa.: April Axe
Memorial, Martinsburg, Pa.: Jason Peterman, Pauline Keagal
Middle Creek, Lititz, Pa.: Matthew Burkhart
Modesto, Calif.: Mike Monson
Mohican, W. Salem, Ohio: Greg and Julie Strickler
Monitor, McPherson, Kan.: Michael Plenert, Delberta Plenert, Amanda Plenert, Alisha Plenert, Julia Hoffman, Bradley Yoder
Myerstown, Pa.: Earl and Shirley Brandt, Suzanne Kiguru, Nancy Yonker, William and Janet Post, Mark Bomberger, Scott Bomberger, Michelle Dohner, Braden Brubaker
New Covenant, Gotha, Fla.: William Schultz, Kelly Madden Crouse, Peter Crouse
Nokesville, Va.: Virginia Antos, Frank and Shirley Golladay, Ralph and Mary Weimer, Nancy Hedges
Northern Colorado, Windsor, Colo.: John and Marilyn Orth, Margo Orth
Panora, Iowa: Gloria Searcy, Hillory Wofford, Matthew and Shelby Sutherland, Ashley Wilson, Michelle, Tonya, and Vickie Krause, Kelly Hodges, Bill Stephen, Connie Daggett, Lorie Sheets, Tina Dawson, Brian Swails, Tracy Gilliam, George Vannatta, Henry Alborn, Mark Behr, Chris Krueger, Chuck Albrecht, Danny and Tresa Moon, Pete and Patsy Flagstead, Gene and Marilyn Burns, Tim, Denise, Marc, and Joe Tyler, Pat and Norma McGriff, Helen McCord, Nikki and Becky Clark, Nathon Keith, Darrell and Helen Williams, Kathy Symonaitis, Chris Long, Jodi Sutton, Alma Krueger, Mary Nelson, Jan Erickson, Dan and Kathy York, Margaret Hennen, Kent and Shelley Downing, Leonard Lewis
Pittsburgh, Pa.: Brent Murray, Eddie Cookson, Corrine Lange
Poplar Ridge, Defiance, Ohio: Paul and Carol Brown, Desirae and Amber Armstrong, Dawn Laws
Prince of Peace, Kettering, Ohio: Jessica and Joshua Flory-Steury, Amber DeCarlo, Brian Jenkins, Heather Loveless, Eric and Tom Stephenson, Arthur Barber, Nicole Wincher, Jesse McKinney
Roann, Ind.: Mildred Baldridge, Brady Brower, Christy Brower, Delinda Brower, Ted Brower, Angel Clingaman, Steve Clingaman, Henry Cervantes, Janell Dockter, Nathan Docter, Abbie Guthrie, Stefanie Hostetler, Addison Krom, Norma Krom, Lisa Lengel, Steve Lengel, Alta Long, Karel Long, Pam Long, Russell Long, Terry Long, Marie Showalter, Marti Striker, Leroy Striker, Katie Lengel, Joshua Lengel, Maggie Lengel, Andy Brower, Gina Cervantes, Caley Cook, Mychal Cook, David Diener, Mark Hicks, Nicole Hicks, Wilma Hicks, Deric Musselman, Jeremy Pugh, Jon Wick, Aaron Bolinger, Alaina Clingaman, Helena Holts, Joshua Sinclair, Katlynn Youngblood, Zachary Youngblood, Ashley Zeller
Roanoke, La.: Charlie McGee
Roaring Spring, Pa.: Tom and Tammy Davis, Noel and Gloria Miller, Virginia Miller, Ken and Jan Claar
Sugar Valley, Loganton, Pa.: Kim and Holly Barner, Scott and Bonnie Owens, Jim and Belva Bower
Union Center, Nappanee, Ind.: Londa Bontrager, Greg and Lara Lawrence, Phil Wiens, Pauline Yoder
Westminster, Md.: Scott Hodgdon, Kent and Dorien Mathias, Randy Ripley, Jack and Beth Tevis
White Oak, Penryn, Pa.: David Zimmerman, Cole Zimmerman, Leah Althouse
York First, York, Pa.: Larry and Jeanine Logue, Scott and Misty Kready, John and Mary Esther Anderson, Jeff Sunday

228th BVS Orientation Unit

(Orientation was conducted at Camp Ithiel, Gotha, Fla., Jan. 18-Feb. 6, 1998.)

Kroger, Florian, Eicklingen, Germany; to Community Family Life Services, Washington, D. C.
Lehmphul, Matthias, Potsdam, Germany; to National Campaign to Abolish the Death Penalty, Washington, D. C.
Martin, Jonathan, Harrisonburg, Va.; to Peace Brigades International, Hamburg, Germany
Nicolaidis, Costa, Seattle, Wash.; to Church of the Brethren Washington Office, Washington, D. C.
Roth, M. C., Ann Arbor, Mich.; to Mladi Most, Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Tillmann, Andreas, Hattert, Germany; to Washington City Church of the Brethren Soup Kitchen, Washington, D. C.
Zook, Nancy, Tekonsha, Mich.; to (short term) Su Casa Catholic Worker, Chicago, Ill., and (after April) Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, London, England.

Deaths

Abbott, Anna, 90, Lewiston, Minn., April 21, 1997
Bahn, Lee A., 49, Windsor, Pa., Jan. 7
Bechdolt, Paul, 77, Camden, Ind., Nov. 21
Beck, Alverta, 87, Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 27
Benson, Robert Jay, 58, La Verne, Calif., Dec. 28
Bishop, Charles J., 91, Defiance, Ohio, Sept. 7
Black, Tracy M., 82, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 6
Blosser, Janice M., 50, South English, Iowa, Jan. 23
Boitnott, Nell K., 96, Bridgewater, Va., Nov. 18
Bolt, Helen F., 76, Roanoke, Va., Nov. 12, 1996
Bond, Mary, 85, Hagerstown, Md., Sept. 18
Bowman, Grace Virginia, 75, Edinburg, Va., Nov. 5
Bowman, Ernie Holt, 51, Callaway, Va., Feb. 4
Boyd, Ellen, 77, Cambridge City, Ind., Aug. 18, 1995
Breneman, Howard, 97, Clayton, Ind., Dec. 27
Brown, Elizabeth S., 86, Chambersburg, Pa., Dec. 24
Brubaker, Bessie Jane Fillmore, 95, Yuba City, Calif., Dec. 20
Brubaker, Frederick, 82, Neffsville, Pa.., Dec. 20
Bushong, Grace Smucker, 97, Timberville, Va., Nov. 26
Butler, Emma Durstine, 82, Champion, Pa., Dec. 11
Byers, Abigail J., 87, Daleville, Ind., Feb. 19
Caldwell, Beauford, 68, Vinton, Va., May 1
Callahan, Russell, Wyomissing, Pa., Dec. 22
Carpenter, Oscar, 80, Dayton, Va., Nov. 7
Champaygne, Edmund, 85, New Oxford, Pa., Oct. 4
Chronister, Velma E., 82,

York, Pa., Jan. 11
Clark, Luella, 85, Middletown, Va., Dec. 10
Clark, Kenneth, 75, N. Liberty, Ind., June 10
Cline, Mary Belle, 64, Fishersville, Va., Dec. 17
Cosner, Jessie K., 98, Lancaster, Pa., June 27
Cox, Don, 82, Warsaw, Ind., Dec. 24
Craft, Levi K., 87, Roanoke, Va., Nov. 7
Crater, Louise J., 59, Middletown, Pa., Dec. 30
Craven, Mary, 86, Prince of Peace CoB, Kettering, Ohio, June 13
Crilly, Roy, 69, Hagerstown, Md., August 8
Crowtber, James, 86, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 23
Custer, Lucille, 85, Warsaw, Ind., Jan. 28
Daniel, Frances E., 81, Champion, Pa., Jan. 18
Danner, Lucille Marianna, 69, Astoria, Ill., Dec. 29
Dellinger, Betty Jean, 77, Hagerstown, Md., June 2
Diffenbach, Roy, 77, Lititz, Pa., Dec. 11
Dinsmore, David, 81, Tipp City, Ohio, Jan. 4
Dixon, John Henry, 71, Brightwood, Va., Dec. 28
DuVal, Robert, 68, Springfield, Ohio, Dec. 18
Eikenberry, Lewisburg, Ohio, Feb. 4
Eisenhart, William P., 67, York, Pa., Dec. 28
Eisenhart, William P., 67, York, Pa., Dec. 28
Erwin, Isabel, 80, Modesto, Calif., Jan. 22
Evans, Lela, 88, North Manchester, Ind., Nov. 6
Felton, Elsie Florence, 88, Rowlesburg, W. Va., Dec. 30
Fike, Robert E., 67, Camp Hill, Pa., Jan. 9
Fisher, Audrey, 53, Rocky Mount, Va., Nov. 16
Flora, Wilford C., 83, Boones Mill, Va., Jan. 25
Flory, H. Lee, 68, Nokesville, Va., Nov. 4
Flory, Walter Lee, 89, Manassas, Va., March 7, 1997
Folk, Wilfred, 77, Claypool, Ind., Nov. 18
Forney, Paul, 82, Palmyra, Pa., Jan. 13
Forsyth, Lear A., 82, Staunton, Va., Nov. 5
Fry, Paul, 77, Phoenixville, Pa., Nov. 10
Fuhrman, Mabel E., 70, Glen Rock, Pa., Jan. 3
Fulcher, Minnie Stone, 83, Bassett, Va., April 13
Fulk, Fred, 85, Myerstown, Pa., Dec. 16
Gaerte, Julia, 86, Avilla, Ind., Sept. 9, 1996
Geesemore, Rut, 65, Fredericksburg, Pa., March 9, 1997
Gehr, Charles, 75, Hagerstown, Md., Feb. 19, 1997
Gehr, Barry, 28, Ephrata, Pa., July 15
Glosser, Rhoda, 87, Hagerstown, Md., Dec. 19
Gochnauer, Mabel, 75, Manheim, Pa., Jan. 14
Good, John B. F., Sr., 88, Grottoes, Va., Oct. 28
Gouker, Elizabeth, 89, McSherrystown, Pa., Nov. 22
Grabner, Harold, 76, Columbia City, Ind., June 10
Graffis, Homer, 87, N. Manchester, Ind., Dec. 10
Grandstaff, Ethel Rebecca, 81, Woodstock, Va., Dec. 14
Greim, Mary Roop, 86, Lee's Summit, Mo., Dec. 23
Greiman, Lillian P. ,May, 87, New Oxford, Pa., Dec. 18
Grim, Naomi A. Smeltzer, 80, Red Lion, Pa., Dec. 18
Grimes, Eden Hallie, 69, Bealeton, Va., Dec. 31
Grimm, Grace, 92, Boonesboro, Md., April 28, 1997
Grogg, Lucille M. , 60, Hinton, Va., Nov. 6
Guilliams, Minnie, 86, Callaway, Va., Nov. 3
Halt, Gary, 44, Manchester, Mo., Sept. 8
Harper, Hazel, 76, Seneca Rocks, W. Va., Nov. 26
Harris, John W., 83, Roanoke, Va., Dec. 20
Hartman, Robert N., 65, Red Lion, Pa., Jan. 9
Hartman, Kenneth, 84, Wooster, Ohio, Jan. 27
Heatwole, Herman Wilbur, 83, Hinton, Va., Nov. 7
Heavner, Helen L., 66, Moorefield, W. Va., Nov. 23
Heinzman, Meredith, 78, Arcadia, Ind., Sept. 25
Helmick, Erma Lee, 66, Baker, W. Va., Oct. 27
Hershey, Nelson, 75, Manheim, Pa., Dec. 31
Hess, Harold, 87, Fort Wayne, Ind., Dec. 26
Hickernell, Emma, 66, Ephrata, Pa., July 26
Holderread, Othel O., 80, Walkerton, Ind., Dec. 22
Holloway, Fern, 88, Pittsburgh, Pa., Feb. 2
Honeyman, Noel, Laura, Ohio, Feb. 1
Hoover, Benjamin Ernest, 71, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 3
Hummer, John, 94, Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 16
Hunt, Levauda, 94, Lima, Ohio, Jan. 17
Hunt, Levauda, 94, Chippewa Lake, Ohio, Jan. 23
Jagger, Harry, 94, Columbia City, Ind., Nov. 2, 1996
Jones, Vena Alice, 91, Hilltop, W. Va., Feb. 5
Lantz, Ona Murl, 81, Broadway, Va., Nov. 2
Lantz, Lois Katherine Lineweaver, 69, Broadway, Va., Jan. 12
Laughman, Peggy A. Riley Bechtel, 47, Hanover, Pa.
Leatherman, Lee, 53, Chambersburg, Pa., Jan. 28
Leonard, Willard B., 69, Cambridge City, Ind., Dec. 14, 1995
Lewis, Dorothy, 77, Lewiston, Minn., Jan. 11
Likens, Milla A., 95, Mt. Storm, W. Va., Nov. 14
Lineweaver, Violet, 78, Bridgewater, Va., Dec. 16
Link, Samuel D., 89, Baker, W. Va., Nov. 13
Loan, Mary Margaret, 65, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 12
Longenecker, Grace, 81, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 22
Looney, Clenna, 79, McPherson, Kan., Nov. 18
Lum, Alice, 88, Williamsport, Md., Feb. 10, 1997
Lynn, George, 79, Hagerstown, Md., March 21, 1997
Mahoney, Daniel, 86, La Verne, Calif., Jan. 8
Marks, Elva, 92, Manheim, Pa., Nov. 28
McCauley, Catherine, 86, Williamsport, Md., Feb. 20, 1997
McCauslin, Martha E., 81, Dillsburg, Pa., Dec. 26
McGunigill, Mina, 76, Warsaw, Ind., Nov. 14
McKimmy, Howard, 67, Beaverton, Mich., Feb. 7
Merrifield, Daniel, 91, Champaign, Ill., Jan. 19
Merriman, Sam, 87, Bassett, Va., Feb. 11
Metzger, Ethel I., 73, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Jan. 26
Miller, Hazel Bolt, 84, Roanoke, Va., July 13, 1997
Miller, Roger, Laura, Ohio, Feb. 2
Miller, Dewitt, 88, Williamsport, Md., May 21, 1997
Miller, Roy A., 79, East Berlin, Pa., Dec. 29
Miller, Marion "Mike", 56, Nokesville, Va., Feb. 26, 1997
Miller, Dorothy, 57, Grottoes, Va., Nov. 25
Mitchell, Harold, 47, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 21
Mitchell, Myrtle Belle, 79, N. Manchester, Ind., Oct. 24
Moncrief, Carrie, 71, Prince of Peace CoB, Kettering, Ohio, Oct. 21
Morris, Goldie Miller, 79, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 24
Mowere, Adele, 87, Honey Brook, Pa., July 12
Mundy, Eva Wampler, 81, Bridgewater, Va., Dec. 9
Myers, Estella E., 84, Gettysburg, Pa., Jan. 3
Nedrow, George, 81, Donegal, Pa., Sept. 30
Neikirk, Mary, 96, Hockessin, Del., Feb. 6, 1997
Nolen, Gladys, 87, Bassett, Va., Dec. 22
Oyler, Ursel, 84, Flora, Ind., Nov. 20
Patterson, John, 81, Martinsburg, Pa., Dec. 22
Pendleton, Nellie Boyd, 87, Bassett, Va., Dec. 27
Petry, Velma, 83, New Lebanon, Ohio, Feb. 7
Phillips, Gladys Jane, 80, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 6
Platt, Marie, 77, Berlin, Pa., Oct. 20
Prillaman, Vivian, 82, Standardsville, Va., Dec. 8
Privette, James Monroe, 69, Bassett, Va., Jan. 1
Ravegum, Roberta, 52, Ephrata, Pa., Dec. 4
Reeder, Donald, 64, Boonesboro, Md., May 1
Reichert, Lucille, 80, Tipp City, Ohio, Jan. 23
Remsburg, Percy, 96, Akron, Ohio, Jan. 16
Rhodamer, Frances, 64, Somerset, Pa., Jan. 30
Riggleman, Leonard E., 59, Harrisonburg, Va., July 26
Ross, Pearl, 97, Butler, Ohio, Jan. 9
Russell, Donald, 73, Hagerstown, Md., July 1
Sanders, Richard, 67, St. Charles, Minn., Sept. 1
Sawyer, Florence, 83, Kingman, Kan., Jan. 22
Schnee, Edgar, 73, Springfield, Ore., May 11, 1996
Seitsinger, Earl R., 83, South English, Iowa, Oct. 10
Shafer, Hannah O., 86, Gettysburg, Pa., Jan. 19
Sheets, George, 100, Nappanee, Ind., Dec. 16
Shugar, Mabel, 83, Marquette, Kan., Jan. 16
Shull, Grace, 77, Bridgewater, Va., Dec. 22
Silvis, Gladys, 71, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., July 25
Sines, David E., 81, Colonial Beach, Va., Dec. 18
Singley, Fleeta F., 98, Gettysburg, Pa., Jan. 24
Sisson, Frances, 77, Melcroft, Pa., June 17
Smith, Sterling, 76, Schaefferstown, Pa., May 31
Smith, Edna, 98, Frederick, Pa., July 2
Snider, Treva, 92, Wakarusa, Ind., Sept. 28
Stamback, Ada P., 87, Roanoke, Va., Jan. 15
Stambaugh, Leona, 78, Hanover, Pa., Sept. 11
Stillman, Albert, Jr., 55, Phoenixville, Pa., July 9
Stone, Laura E., 88, Stanleytown, Va., Nov. 29
Strickler, Grace E., 78, Elizabethtown, Pa., Dec. 31
Studebaker, Frances, 74, Springfield, Ohio, Nov. 6
Sweigart, Robert A., 87, York, Pa., Dec. 20
Swiridow, Dorothy, 64, Middletown, Va., Nov. 4
Tannreuther, Orville, 99, Waterloo, Iowa, Dec. 17
Thompson, Edith, 86, Greenville, Ohio, Jan. 21
Utterback, Richard E. Jr., 59, Midland, Va., Jan. 23
Walter, Dorothy M., 95, Manchester, N. H., Dec. 27
Walters, Lillian, 85, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Feb. 14
Walters, Leo, 87, Liberty Mills, Ind., Nov. 12
Wastler, Carrie E., 88, Thurmont, Md., Dec. 9
Weddle, Bertha, 91, Girard, Ill., Dec. 20
Whipple, Lee, 83, Yoncalla, Ore., Oct. 7
White, Lucy, 77, Prince of Peace CoB, Kettering, Ohio, Feb. 28
White, Gilbert, 95, Melcroft, Pa., Oct. 16
Williams, Sandra, 55, Defiance, Ohio, April 14, 1997
Winchester, Jesse, 70, New Castle, Ind., August 24, 1995
Wolf, Charles E., Sr., 80, York County, Pa., Jan. 30
Wood, Mattie, 86, Fredericksburg, Va., Oct. 27
Wright, Nettie, 100, Utica, Minn., Dec. 11
Ziegler, Reba, 60, Manheim, Pa., Dec. 30
Zimmerman, Samuel Warren, Dixon, Ill., Jan. 14
Zittle, Betty, 69, Hagerstown, Md., Oct. 26
Zumbrun, Ray, 40, Columbia City, Ind., Aug. 12

Editorial

When Jesus comes to the New Sudan

As night settled on our compound in Narus, Sudan, I got deep into a spiritual funk over what God was doing here and what role God had for me in it. It had been a long day of listening to Sudanese women and men describe the hardships of war, the sorrow of being displaced from their homes, the conflicts that arise from the lack of necessities like firewood. I cannot comprehend that a million people have died here from fighting and famine during 15 years of war. The people in southern Sudan have great faith in Jesus, who they trust will deliver them and bring peace to their villages. As they try to feed their children and reunite their scattered families, hope stays alive. I am inspired by their faith but daunted by their suffering.

What am I to do about it? Why am I here? Surely there is a deep spiritual message in the pain and evil surrounding us. As our travel group sat in the gathering darkness that evening in late January, a noisy gasoline-powered generator made conversation difficult while it powered electric lights enjoyed only by insects. I wanted to talk over God's larger message. But my colleagues wanted to talk about the lists that they had made. Lists! Lists of projects for churches to do. Lists of ways we could help. Isn't this just like North Americans, I thought, to come up with ways to fix things before we even fully understand the problems? Aren't we just trying to hand out Band-aids to make ourselves feel better? Projects seem so trivial in the midst of war. Wait a minute before we go fixing, I pleaded. "Shouldn't we pray about this first?" My friends said they knew where I was coming from, that I was saying the heart has to be right before the head takes over, and that they were taking our hearts for granted, and, oh yes, about these projects.... I concluded they were on a head trip, I was on a heart trip, and both sides of this discussion were on an ego trip. The more I talked, the more offensive I became, and nothing was resolved. I went to bed.

• • • • • • • •

Bumping and rolling in that back seat, I decided to let Jesus bring peace to Sudan. He would stop the dying and return people to their homes.

• • • • • • • •

From my cot in that tent God soon came and took me in a dream to the New Sudan. New Sudan is what the people call the land of their postwar hopes. It is what youngsters go to school for now, to train for their role in the New Sudan. Each act of peace and reconciliation in the refugee camps now is understood as helping to build the New Sudan. I was getting a preview tour. As though flying in a silent helicopter, I saw happy families working in fields under glorious sunshine. People were in their own homes. The men had come back. The fields were no longer barren with scrub trees, as we had been used to seeing, but growing what looked to me like Illinois soybeans.

I awoke refreshed and apologetic for my contrariness of last night. Lists no longer seemed wrong or trivial. That day we listened to more church committees describe their activities and their needs. One young chaplain, sensing that his American visitors might become overwhelmed by the size of the peacemaking task, retold the old story of the thousands of fish that had washed up on on a riverbank. A man went by throwing one by one back into the water before it died. He was confronted with the fact there were so many floundering fish; how could his meager efforts possibly make a difference? "Each time I throw one back it makes a difference to that fish," he said. Later on that day somebody quoted Mother Teresa: "We cannot do great things for God. We can do only small things with great love." Projects for peace began to sound better to me.

"Soon and very soon, I'm going to see the king...." Each time we packed ourselves into the Land Rover to travel over treacherous roads to the next Sudanese village, our skillful but crazy driver Augustine would plug in this tape. "No more dying here, I'm going to see the king...." Bumping and rolling in that back seat, I decided to let Jesus bring peace to Sudan. He would stop the dying and return people to their homes. I'd let the Lord plant the soybeans, if that's what they were. My part would be to embrace lists and projects and throw fish back one by one. The important thing for our church is not to succeed here, but to be here. Whatever we do for peace in Sudan, if it's done with great love, won't be wrong. The risk is that we will stay home and argue about mission philosophy. The important thing is to be here with these people when peace comes. When Jesus comes.

Peace may be near. There are formal talks scheduled for this spring between the government of Sudan and the main rebel group. We were told there are many behind-the-scenes peace initiatives being undertaken now. Soon after we got back home a *New York Times* article described hopeful moves in Khartoum that could relax Islamic rule and allow greater political freedom for Sudan.

Our group wasn't much for singing, but once on a trip in the Land Rover we got Augustine to eject his tape and we tried: "Freedom! Freedom is coming! Freedom is coming, oh yes, I know." We weren't very good but we were sincere. Over the ruts we let it rip: "Jesus! Jesus is coming! Jesus is coming, oh yes, I know."—Fletcher Farrar

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ABC's Service to the Denomination

Association of Brethren Caregivers
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Brethren Chaplains Network provides networking opportunities for chaplains and others in special ministries within the Church of the Brethren.

Church and Persons with Disabilities Network facilitates barrier-free participation of individuals with disabilities in the life and programs of local congregations and other church agencies.

Denominational Deacon Ministry develops and promotes resources to equip deacons to carry out their ministries in congregation. A new resource for deacons, *Deacon Manual for Caring Ministries*, will be available in late spring.

Fellowship of Brethren Homes identifies, promotes and supports the work of Brethren retirement communities as an important mission and ministry of the denomination.

Health Education and Research Ministry encourages consideration of health ministries as an attractive career option and increases awareness of available funding support for individuals preparing for health ministries.

Lafiya: A Whole-Person Health Ministry supports wellness and wholeness within the local congregations and other church agencies.

Older Adult Ministry develops resources and leadership that enables Church of the Brethren older adults to enjoy full and creative lives. The fourth National Older Adult Conference (NOAC 98), a special conference for adults 50 or older, will be held August 31 - September 5, 1998, at Lake Junaluska, N.C.

VOICE (Valuing Openness, Inclusiveness and Caring for Everyone Ministry) addresses concerns within the denomination regarding addictions, HIV/AIDS and mental health.

Watch for more information about **a new ministry program that focuses on family issues**.

For more information about ABC and its many ministry groups, please call (800) 323-8039 and mention this Messenger ad.

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Messenger

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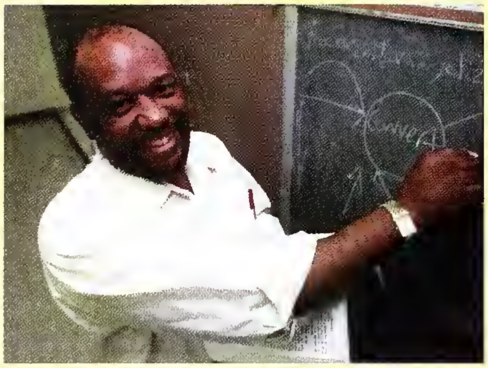

Photos by Jeff Leard

Whatever your walk in life, maybe it's time for you to consider God's call to ...

MINISTRY

For information on calling or training for ministry, contact your pastor or district executive or write or call Ministry Office, Church of the Brethren General Board, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60123 (800 323-8039, ext. 208).

Messenger

Vol. 147, No. 4 May 1998

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On the cover: Cover photo is of Grace Zoaka, active in the EYN church in Jos, Nigeria. The photograph is by Glenn Mitchell, pastor of University Baptist and Brethren Church in State College, Pa. Mitchell spent seven months in Nigeria as an exchange pastor beginning in November 1996.

10

Sue Grubb

Features

10 **EYN's Diamond Jubilee**

In 1923 the first Brethren worship service in Nigeria was held under a tamarind tree. On March 17 that same tree saw thousands of members of the thriving EYN church and a large delegation of Brethren from the US come back to the spot to celebrate 75 years of partnership.

16 **Taking the chill off Belfast**

Brethren Volunteer Service workers are contributing to the cause of peace in Northern Ireland by working in a family support center and managing youth activity programs. Jeff Leard, photographer and writer, stopped off to see them on the way home from his own BVS assignment, and filed this report.

20 **Beans and rice and Jesus Christ**

Joel Ulrich was in culture shock when he began his Ministry Summer Service assignment in East Los Angeles last year. From pastor Gilbert Romero, the Bella Vista Church of the Brethren, and recovering drug addicts, he gained new appreciation for the life-changing power of the gospel.

23 **Holy Impatience**

A review of William Sloane Coffin's book *A Passion for the Possible* gives Brethren a preview of what may be in store when the activist pastor preaches on Friday night of Annual Conference.

24 **More-or-less faith**

"You and I know who doubting Thomas is," writes Brethren pastor Kenneth Gibble. "Thomas is ourselves." He advises readers to consider the important role doubt has to play in their spiritual lives.

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From the Publisher

In a recent speech to Protestant publishers, Auburn Seminary president Barbara Wheeler outlined a gloomy context for organized religion. While she was speaking about "customers in a new century," her analysis is worth consideration by anyone interested in fostering discipleship within the church.

She identified five trends facing the church today: 1) We have become a nation of switchers, and most switchers don't care about denominations. 2) Local programs are more trusted than faraway programs. The unofficial organization is more trustworthy than the official one. 3) Any organization that chooses to respond—for whatever motive—is more trusted than the ones that are supposed to respond. 4) There is a trend away from organized religious activity. 5) Nevertheless, 90 percent of the population claims a belief in God.

In this climate, we do not have customers (meaning those who customarily trust and buy from their denominations), said Wheeler. They're just passengers, traveling through. "The time is surely coming, says the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. . . . they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it" (Amos 8:11-12).

Fortunately, Wheeler didn't stop with the diagnosis. She offered a prescription: We must expand the definition of what it means to publish. Our materials must create new patterns of use, because the old forms of use are breaking down: Every-Sunday participation is down. Membership is down. Family devotions and home Bible study are going out of style.

"Gone are the patterns of life that formed customers. If we want people to be hungry again, those publications themselves have to teach people how to use them," said Wheeler. In an artful juxtaposition with the Amos passage, she cited Deuteronomy 30:11-14: "The word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe."

While I don't normally like to use "customer" in relation to the church, the term works if by it we mean those who trust and value their church community. In a loving endorsement of the institutional church, Wheeler described religious traditions "at their best" as "a record of what human beings have learned over time as they strive to be faithful to God. What we have learned is something of what God is like."

In other words, there's wisdom in the gathered community that's bigger than that relationship each of us has personally with God. That sounds very Brethren.

Wheeler reminded her listeners that the Christian publishing movement began not to respond to a market, but to create disciples. These early publishing enterprises found themselves with customers who wanted more. "Making customers is our vocation," Wheeler concluded. "It is a very high calling."

The goal of a denominational publishing house is not to sell; it is to nurture discipleship. The goal of a church is not to create the best program to attract today's "passenger"; it is to form disciples by seeking the word of God *together*.

Wendy McFadden

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Putting cattle in cans

About 200 volunteers processed 26,974 cans of beef last month in Ephrata, Pa., to help combat hunger in Pennsylvania and abroad. The volunteers were from Church of the Brethren congregations in Mid-Atlantic and Southern Pennsylvania districts. This was the districts' 18th annual meat canning project, and it processed 50,000 pounds of beef, said Georgia Markey, associate executive of Southern Pennsylvania District. This year 50 percent of the beef will be sent abroad to yet-to-be-determined locations while the remaining meat will be distributed between the two districts. Keeping half of the meat locally "will address some of the concerns we have here in our own area," Markey said. —Nevin Dulabaum

The choir chosen *for the commercial included three Church of the Brethren members.*

Harmonyville church sings praises of yogurt

If you're watching television sometime this year and a Colombo Yogurt commercial comes in, take a quick look—a quick look is all you'll get—to see three Church of the Brethren members singing praises for the foodstuff in front of Harmonyville Church of the Brethren, in southeastern Pennsylvania.

How did this country church with about 50 weekly attendees draw the attention of a Chicago advertising agency that was hired to produce the Columbo commercial? It was all in the name.

DDNeedham was looking for three examples of rural America, examples with unique names. In addition to Harmonyville, it settled on Hurricane, Utah, and Grapevine, Texas.

Pastor John Kolle received a call on Feb. 25 from a representative of Crash Films out of California, the company hired to produce the commercial.

Those who auditioned had

Kevin Hoffman

Film crews *from Crash Films of Santa Monica, Calif., set up light diffuser panels outside the Harmonyville (Pa.) Church of the Brethren.*

(continued from page 3)

to take a spoonful of imaginary yogurt and pretend to enjoy it. After that, auditioners were placed into groups of four to form imaginary choruses that sang, "Oh Colombo, Oh Colombo," to the tune of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus.

From the 76 who auditioned, 8 area residents were selected, among them 3 Church of the Brethren members— Dorothy Pusey and Deana Deichert, who attend the Harmonyville congregation, and Robert Bedi, a member of Coventry Church of the Brethren in Pottstown.

Technicians began arriving at the Harmonyville church on March 4 at 5:30 a.m. The singing took place just outside the front door. An hour lunch break was taken, and the filming was finished by 3 p.m. The church received a few refinements in the process — a quick paint job to its front facade; a new cross that was placed above the vestibule; a church sign that was placed across the road; and magnolia blossoms and shrubbery to make it look more like spring. The blossoms and the shrubs were removed once the filming had concluded.

—Nevin Dulabaum

They've been making music for generations

Mildred Swinger, 84, doesn't know how long she's been playing the piano at Broadwater Church of the Brethren, Essex, Mo., but she started not long after she became a member there at age 11. She knows her daughter, Elizabeth Petty, has been playing the organ there for the past 40 years, and her granddaughter, Marie Petty, has been songleader for quite a few years too. The three generations handle music responsibilities for the small congregation nearly every Sunday.

Musical Family. *Mildred Swinger, left, her daughter Elizabeth Petty, center, and grandaughter Marie Petty.*

Ministry of music

Marie Dulabaum Mullins has played the piano or the organ in the churches she has attended for the past sixty-five years. She started playing the piano at East Nimishillen Church of the Brethren, North Canton, Ohio, when she was 14 years old, and began playing the organ after the church purchased its first one in 1954. She moved to Arizona and attended First Church of the Brethren, Phoenix, in 1961. She was asked to play the organ or piano and has been playing ever since. "I am glad to serve the Lord with music," she says.

Marie Mullins *"serving the Lord."*

Remembered

—Merle T. Seehorn died Feb. 5 at the Bridgewater Retirement Community, Bridgewater, Va. She was 104. She was a member of he Bridgewater Church of he Brethren. Her husband, the Rev. J. Elmer Seehorn, died in 1974.

—Grace Douglas died an. 31 at the age of 103 in Roanoke, Va. She was a charter member of Central Church of the Brethren, Roanoke.

—Lena Norford, 100, of Stuarts Draft, Va., died Feb. 26. In 1925 she moved to Washington, D.C., where she lived for 39 years and was an active member of the Washington City Church of the Brethren. In 1964 she moved to Verona, Va., and was a member of Middle River Church of the Brethren, New Hope.

—Cleo Margarette Wagoner, 92, died Jan. 10 at the Morrisons Cove Home in Martinsburg, Pa. Raised in Ohio, in 1925 she moved to Chicago, where she worked with her husband, Floyd, in the Wagoner Realty firm. For many years they took an active role in First Church of the Brethren, Chicago, and shared their faith with people of the East Garfield Park neighborhood.

—Pearl Ross, 97, of Butler, Ohio, died Jan. 9 at the age of 97. In 1918 she received a normal degree from Manchester College and was a schoolteacher for 33 years. She had been a member of North Bend Church of the Brethren, Danville, Ohio, since 1912.

—James W. Coffey, Jr., 72, died Feb. 9 at his home in Weyers Cave, Va. In 1947 he signed with the New York Yankees and played professional baseball before returning to Virginia where he played for a local league. He was co-founder of Staunton Foods, Inc., and active in business until his retirement in 1997. He was a member of Summit Church of the Brethren, Bridgewater, Va., where he taught Sunday school.

—Lera B. Jarrels, 86, died Dec. 31 in an automobile accident near her home in Port Republic, Va. She was a member of Mill Creek Church of the Brethren, Port Republic, Va., where she had played piano and organ for 70 years. She had been scheduled to play for the last time the Sunday following her death.

—Zola Meyers Detweiler, 94, died Jan. 12 in Bridgewater, Va. She graduated from Juniata College and served with her husband, the late Rev. George Detweiler, for 44 years in the ministry of the Church of the Brethren. Their ministry included a congregation in Indianapolis, Ind., and numerous congregations in Pennsylvania, including Salisbury, Beachdale, Garrett, Meyersdale, Juniata College, Waynesboro, Somerset, and Greencastle.

Rebecca Klingler, *who now lives in Los Angeles, gets back "home" to North Manchester, Ind., at least twice a year.*

Actress's star rises as Titanic sinks

"It will all be over soon," says the mother as she holds her frightened child, just before the *Titanic* sinks into the sea. "It will all be over soon." The doomed mother is played in the blockbuster movie by Rebecca Klingler, who grew up in the Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind., and attended Manchester College. Her father, Charles Klingler, was a longtime professor of English at Manchester College before he retired.

Klingler's few seconds on the screen take place about 3 hours into the movie, about 15 minutes before the end. To prepare for the scene took "a lifetime of training," she says, and about 3 months waiting on location during the filming at Rosarito, Mexico, before her two days of filming. Klingler filmed a death scene for the movie but it was cut because it was "too horrific," she was told. She also makes an appearance as an office clerk in *L.A. Confidential.*

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

News

ABC continues innovations and organizational change

The structure and composition of the Association of Brethren Caregivers' (ABC) new Family Life Steering Committee was approved in March by the ABC board. This new ministry group will include Carolyn Arthur, Richmond, Va.; Sharon Burner, Elgin, Ill.; Carl Graver, Holtwood, Pa.; Deb and John Lahman, Glendale, Ariz.; Don and Joyce Jordon, Ft. Wayne, Ind., and Judy Myers-Walls, West Lafayette, Ind. June Adams Gibble is staff liaison.

Mary Dulabaum

ABC board chair *Bob Cain, left, with Annual Conference director Duane Steiner and Annual Conference moderator Elaine Sollenberger. Discussions are under way regarding formal recognition of ABC by Annual Conference.*

During its two days of spring meetings, the ABC board discussed a recommendation from an ad hoc committee that ABC shift its funding from memberships to donations.

The board also:

- agreed to participate on the committee that will determine the future location of a central denominational office facility.
- endorsed a new long-term care insurance program that will be available to participating Brethren and Mennonite retirement communities in 1998.
- approved necessary action items for formalizing ABC's status as an independent Church of the Brethren organization. Proposed bylaw changes will be presented to ABC members at their annual meeting this summer in Orlando.

In other business, the board met with the Annual Conference officers to continue discussions as to how ABC can become an officially recognized organization of the Annual Conference, the denomination's top decision-making body. "Hopefully, we will have taken the appropriate steps for this issue to be presented this summer to Standing Committee at Annual Conference," said Steve Mason, ABC executive director.

The board heard a report from staff detailing how three of ABC's current four newsletters will be combined into one quarterly publication in January. According to Mary Dulabaum, ABC's director of communications, this new publication will be larger than any of ABC's existing publications. The Brethren Homes Connection, a quarterly newsletter for retirement communities, will continue to be published on its own. she added.

June and Jay Gibble to lead Deacon Tour planned for fall

The official Deacon Workshop Tour is heading out this fall and may be coming to your town!

June Adams Gibble and Jay Gibble, both now half-time members of the Association of Brethren Caregivers staff, are planning to take their show on the road in a series of workshops in churches to introduce a new deacon manual and to promote deacon ministries. The tour is sponsored by the Denominational Deacon Cabinet through ABC, and supported by Congregational Life Ministries of the General Board.

A pilot workshop for Northern ndiana District is scheduled for May 30 at the Goshen City (Ind.) Church of the Brethren. Additional workshops are planned across the denomination for this fall. Scheduling is being worked out with all districts that want to participate.

June Adams Gibble joined the ABC staff Jan. 1 as half-time program field staff, after serving the General Board for 10 years as director of Congregational Nurture and Worship. At the same time, Jay Gibble moved from being full-time executive director of ABC to a half-time program field staff position. The move is a step in transition toward Jay's planned retirement, but he has not yet set a date to retire.

In addition to serving as co-staff with Jay on deacon ministries, June Gibble is responsible for implementing ABC's new Family Life Ministries program and helping to plan the upcoming National Older Adult Conference (NOAC 98).

Jay Gibble is the ABC staff person in charge of Older Adult Minstry, including NOAC 98 planned for this August, and the Caring Ministries 2000 conference, planned for June 1999.

Hate e-mail plagues Manchester College

A racist, hate-filled e-mail message sent March 9 to over 100 international and African-American students at Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind., has the college and community abuzz due to the venomous tone of the letter and because the origin of the message has been traced back to the campus.

Jay Gibble

June Gibble

The message, reportedly 34 words that included four racial slurs and the statement "Your time is up. Your ... days are numbered," was sent from a college computer to HotMail, a Sunnyvale, Calif., computer service that allows computer users to send messages under aliases.

The message was forwarded back to the Manchester campus with a HotMail return address and delivered to the e-mail addresses of four student groups — Manchester College International Association, Hispanos Unidos, Black Student Union, and the Hispanic American organization. Manchester's e-mail system then automatically forwarded the message to those organizations' members — 107 students.

The author and the college connection are being sought by college officials, who are even considering subpoenaing HotMail to force that company to identify the college e-mail address from which the hate message originated.

Police began investigating the possibility of a connection between the e-mail and two racially motivated altercations March 5 and 6 between Manchester students and community residents. The investigation was halted, however, when the county prosecutor determined that, though it was offensive, it was legal under Indiana law because it named groups, not individuals.

Such messages to groups are illegal in California, however. Thus, college authorities are exploring the possibility of pressing charges in California if the author is found.

BVS anniversary gift to bring volunteers to Conference

Fifty years ago this summer the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference approved a motion from the Conference floor that became Brethren Volunteer Service.

Several celebrations surrounding BVS' 50th anniversary will be held at this summer's Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla., and all current BVSers who wouldn't normally attend the conference will be able to do so, thanks to an anonymous donor. This person, who has offered to provide transportation, room, and board for all current BVSers, will probably spend between $25,000 and $50,000, said BVS director Dan McFadden, who added that even he does not know the donor's identity.

In a letter to BVS, the donor wrote, "I would like to make a special gift to BVS in honor of its 50th anniversary and because I think BVS is one of our church's greatest assets. It's my hope that this gift will help Brethren gain a deeper knowledge of BVS' value and connect BVSers more closely with other Brethren. It is my hope that as many current BVSers as possible will be able to attend so that Brethren from all over the denomination will see the wonderful gifts of BVS and will be able to interact with the volunteers."

Diaz and Bowman accept new responsibilities

Manuel Diaz has been called to serve as one-quarter-time executive of Southern Plains District, beginning July 1. He also has been called by the Church of the Brethren General Board to serve as a half-time Area 4 Congregational Life Team member.

Diaz has been senior pastor of the new Lake Charles (La.) Church of the Brethren congregation. He also has been an adjunct faculty member at Sowela Technical College and a graduate assistant at McNeese State University.

Carol Bowman of Wenatchee, Wash., has been appointed half-time Area Financial Resource Counselor, Western States, effective April 6. She will continue serving as a half-time Congregational Life Team member.

Bernice King

Paul Mundey

Paul Grout

Judy Mills Reimer

Debbie Eisenbise

Milton Garcia

David Radcliff

Jim Myer

Youth to hear impressive speakers at 1998 NYC

The National Youth Conference office has announced this year's keynote speakers:

- Bernice King, youngest child of Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King. King currently serves as assistant pastor at an inner-city Atlanta church, coordinating youth and women's ministries. A former law clerk, she was ordained in 1990. She holds a B.A. degree in psychology from Spelman College. On the morning of her ordination, she was awarded a master of divinity degree and a doctor of law degree from Emory University. She also has received an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Wesley College. She is author of a book of sermons and speeches titled *Hard Questions, Heart Answers*.
- Paul Mundey, senior pastor of Frederick (Md.) Church of the Brethren. Prior to joining the Frederick congregation in September 1996, Mundey served as Church of the Brethren General Board staff for 13 years, concluding his Board tenure as director of The Andrew Center, the General Board's former evangelism ministry.
- Paul Grout, pastor of the Genesis Church of the Brethren, Putney, Vt., a new church development project in the 1980s. According to Brian Yoder, NYC coordinator, Grout "has been called upon by churches throughout the country to provide leadership in renewing commitment to Jesus Christ and discovering new life in the Spirit."
- Judy Mills Reimer, founding pastor of Smith Mountain Lake Church of the Brethren Fellowship, a new church start in Moneta, Va. Reimer, a former moderator of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, the denomination's highest elected position, has been named as the next executive director of the General Board staff. She is a 1994 graduate of Bethany Theological Seminary.
- Debbie Eisenbise, co-pastor of Skyridge Church of the Brethren, Kalamazoo, Mich., with her husband, Lee Krähenbühl. She is a former member of the General Board staff, having served as orientation director for Brethren Volunteer Service. She has led workshops at the annual Church of the Brethren Young Adult Conferences, and at various regional youth conferences. In 1994, Eisenbise served as an NYC worship coordinator.
- Milton Garcia, currently of Puerto Rico. He attended the University of Puerto Rico and McPherson (Kan.) College, and earned his master of divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary in 1993.
- David Radcliff, director of the General Board's Brethren Witness office since July 1997. Radcliff, who has worked for the General Board since 1989, had served as director of Korean ministries and as director of Denominational Peace Witness prior to assuming his new responsibilities. Radcliff has served as keynote speaker for many conferences and events, including NYC 94.
- Jim Myer, a free minister of White Oak Church of the Brethren, Penryn, Pa., will serve as Bible study leader.

Resources and Opportunities

Ministry of Reconciliation, a ministry of On Earth Peace Assembly, now has a listserv for those interested in MoR and its work or for people who want to discuss ideas about reconciliaion in the church and in the world, said Bob Gross, MoR director. To subscribe, send an e-mail to majordomo@igc.org and write in the message area: subscribe mor-l.

In conjunction with "Sudan: Partnership for Peace," an iniiative approved in March by the General Board, the Board's Brethren Witness office has produced several resources to assist congregations that want to participate. The $238,000 initiative will be funded by the Global Food Crisis Fund, the Church of he Brethren's principle hunger relief and development arm.

A "Share Your Lunch with a Friend" project invites children's classes or others to support a children's nutrition program in the village of New Cush. For 30 cents a day, a child will receive a nutritious snack at one of the community's two chools. The "Take a Friend to School" project challenges individuals, youth groups or Sunday school classes to support the Blessed Bakhita Girls School in Narus. Over 400 girls from 24 different language groups attend the school. Cost for supporting a girl for a full year is $120.

A Brethren Volunteer Service position is being developed to work with the women's capacity-building efforts of the New Sudan Council of Churches. Efforts are also being made to support women's self-help programs, such as tailoring and bread-baking. These initiatives can be supported by individuals or women's fellowship groups.

Brethren peacemakers are invited to support the training of ustice and Peace committees in several refugee camps. These workshops are sponsored by the New Sudan Council of Churches. The Council is also seeking funds for an annual peace prize to be awarded to a Justice and Peace committee.

Printed materials describing these efforts are available. A ull-color Sudan photo display is also available for loan to congregations. Contact Karin Davidson of the Brethren Witness office at kdavidson_gb@brethren.org or at 800 323-8039.

A new study guide for Don Durnbaugh's *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995,* is now available. This 60-page booklet contains eight open-ended questions per chaper that relate historical facts to present-day issues in the Church of the Brethren. According to Jennifer Leo of Brethren Press, *Fruit of the Vine* is "fast becoming a classic" as it traces Brethren history "from eight courageous believers in 1708 to the Church of the Brethren today."

Fruit of the Vine: A Study Guide was written by Linda Logan, oordinator of educational ministries at the Harrisonburg (Va.) Church of the Brethren. Logan also is author of *Whatza Wisahickon,* a Brethren heritage curriculum for children. The tudy guide is $3.95, and the book is $39.95. Contact Brethren Press at brethren_press_gb@brethren.org, 800 441-3712 (phone), or 800 667-8188 (fax).

The 11th annual gathering of the Network of Biblical Storytellers (NOBS) will be held Aug. 5-8 in Wilmington, Del. Focusing on the theme "Call, Career, and Charisma: Telling the Stories of Vocation," this ecumenical event will bring together clergy and laity from the United States and abroad for storytelling, workshops, and keynote addresses. For more information, contact NOBS at nobsint@nobs.org or 800 355-6627.

"Disaster Child Care in the 21st Century: A Look to the Future," will be held May 29-30 at the New Windsor (Md.)Conference Center, located on the Brethren Service Center campus. This symposium, sponsored by the Church of the Brethren General Board's Emergency Response/Service Ministries, will be a working conference for staff of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross, and for denominational leaders and ER/SM's disaster child care leaders.

"CPT Sunday," a day that Christian Peacemaker Teams hopes congregations will focus on CPT's mission and ministries, is scheduled for May 31, which also is Pentecost Sunday. CPT has produced a packet of materials for congregations to use, including worship resources, sermon ideas, and peacemaking stories, which integrate a focus on the power of Pentecost with the vision for faith-based, nonviolent peacemaking. CPT is an independent organization whose membership consists of Church of the Brethren and Mennonite individuals and congregations. For more information, write to cpt@igc.apc.org. The entire resource packet is also available at http://www.prairienet.org/cpt/sunday.html.

The Church of the Brethren General Board's new Mission and Ministries Planning Council (MMPC), a channel through which congregations, districts, and Standing Committee may be involved in planning new mission and ministry projects, has determined how it will conduct business. The council will receive ideas and proposals and will review them before making recommendations to the General Board. MMPC will meet May 20-21. The council will convene again Aug. 27-28, when it will consider ideas or proposals submitted to it by early August. For more information, contact Joseph Mason, interim executive director of the General Board, at gb_gb@brethren.org or at 800 323-8039.

A free one-day training seminar, sponsored by Brethren Revival Fellowship and Durbin Church of the Brethren will be held at the church in Durbin, W. Va., May 30. Workshops include "A Look at New Testament Baptism," "Maintaining Hope During Trials," "Studies in 1 Peter," and "A Study of the Beatitudes." For more information contact pastor Donald Curry at 304-456-4764 or David Rittenhouse at 304-799-4726.

EYN's Diamond Jubilee

The Church of the Brethren in Nigeria celebrates the past and looks toward the future

Sue Grubb

Throngs gathered *on a Nigerian hillside March 17.*

BY SUE GRUBB

The welcoming branches of the tamarind tree in Garkida became the backdrop of the 75th Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Celebration of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN—Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) on March 17. Throngs of people arrived at the field beside the tree, which was the site of the first Brethren worship service held in Nigeria in 1923 by Stover Kulp and Albert Helser. A multitude of EYN members, estimated at more than 5,000, spread across the field and covered the surrounding rocky hills. Some, like Zacchaeus, even climbed into the few scattered trees for a better view of the celebration.

There were 42 representatives of the Church of the Brethren attending, 31 of whom had come as part of a tour group especially for the anniversary event. Many of the representatives were former missionaries or their children, some having dedicated their lives to sharing the love of Christ in Nigeria. In his welcoming address, EYN president the Rev. Bitrus K. Tizhe spoke of EYN's deep appreciation and gratitude to the Church of the Brethren.

The day was filled with singing, prayer, recognition of special guests, speeches on EYN development, and fellowship. There were cultural performances of traditional music, dancing, drumming, and displays of costumes, representing the many tribes that form EYN.

The Diamond Jubilee was a time of thanksgiving for the past blessings of EYN and praying for guidance in the future. And the future looks bright for EYN, one of the fastest growing Christian denominations in Africa.

The popularity of EYN

When I asked members why they are a part of EYN, several responses were given repeatedly:

- EYN stands on the truth of the Bible. There is scriptural basis for its doctrine and an emphasis on teachings of the Word. Members are encouraged to learn about and follow these teachings in daily life. Like the Brethren, several Biblical practices that EYN incorporates into worship are footwashing, the agape meal, and believers' baptism.
- EYN is working to embrace peace with more heart. The Rev. Karagama A. Gadzama, EYN vice president, explained that when the Brethren first came into northeastern

Sue Grubb

The main celebration area *was near the historic tamarind tree, the large tree on the left where the first worship service was held.*

Nigeria in 1923, the local tribes were vicious and constantly fighting one another. This had been their means of survival for centuries. Taking this into consideration, having the many tribes of EYN worshipping together and uniting to work toward common goals is quite an accomplishment. There are still some strong tribal loyalties, but EYN is aware of the need to reduce tensions and move toward a more unified body in Christ.

(75) EYN follows a doctrine of love and this is important to its success. As one member put it, "EYN loves everyone." Even today Nigerian culture is one of stratification, and people are positioned in a hierarchical system with each person recognizing his or her station in life. The Church of the Brethren brought the concept of mutuality to Nigeria, and this is cited as a unique quality of EYN. Members feel that EYN is more democratic than other churches.

(75) EYN has been established for all people. While many religious groups in Nigeria are interested in developing their own members, EYN programs serve people of all faiths who are in need. EYN members seem proud of this tradition that follows the example set by Jesus.

The holistic approach to ministry was the inspiration of Stover Kulp. Teachings about the love of Christ should be reflected through living the love of Christ, an attitude that has always been strong in the Church of the Brethren. EYN's dedication to programs of rural development, health, and education is a living testimony to its members' beliefs.

For example, the EYN Rural Programme (RDP) and Lafiya Programme serve villages in need of basic advancements. The villagers are asked to assess their needs and then RDP works with the people to realize them. Under this program, hundreds of wells providing clean drinking water have been dug.

Healthcare professionals are sparse in Nigeria, so the Lafiya Programme has answered this need with 18 dispensary clinics, numerous health posts, and educational opportunities for community members to learn basic healthcare practices.

EYN educational programs include Kulp Bible College, established by the Church of the Brethren in 1960 to prepare students for Christian ministries in the areas of teaching, pastoring, and community service. Mason Technical School, also begun by the Church of the Brethren, gives secondary school graduates an opportunity to develop skills in auto mechanics or office management. The new EYN Comprehensive Secondary School, opened in 1996, is the church's response to inadequate government schools. Several EYN churches have begun their own schools to insure that their children will receive quality education as well.

These and other development and education programs are headed by EYN leadership, and, although finances are always tight, EYN members value their importance and continue to support them as best they can. These programs are a major contributing factor to the fast-paced growth of the church. As one EYN member said, "People notice when you care about them."

(75) EYN is striving for inclusiveness. Activities for children and youth help to develop their interest in the church at a young age. Women are also encouraged to be involved and, in fact, the EYN Women's Fellowship (ZME) is considered the most hardworking, well-run group in the denomination. It is the women who bring energy and enthusiasm to worship services and church functions.

Lughu Men's Fellowship, a newly formed group in one district, sang at the 75th Anniversary Celebration and was warmly received by the crowd, demonstrating support for more

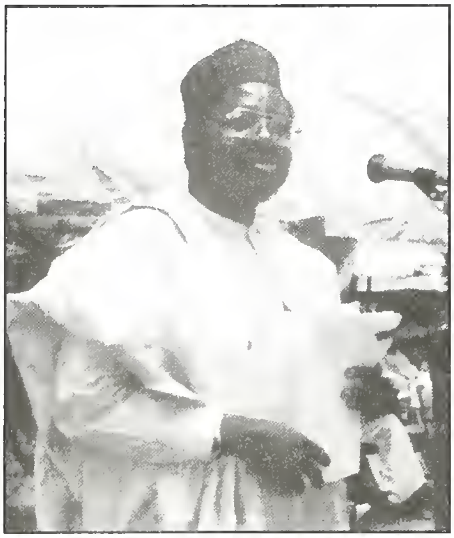
Nigeria Events at Annual Conference

Wednesday evening, July 1
Introduction of Nigerian visitors

Thursday morning, July 2
General Board Live Report includes an anniversary feature segment, "Brethren in Nigeria."

Thursday evening, July 2
Insight Session featuring top Nigeria leaders: president, secretary general, treasurer, women's representatives.

Saturday, July 4, 5-6:30 pm
Anniversary celebration reception. All are welcome, free. Light refreshments.



Sue Grubb

Dr. Bala Takaya *speaks at the anniversary celebration on Christianity and national development relating to EYN.*

involvement of men in this way.

(75) The church has begun to embrace past traditions. When the first missionaries came to Nigeria, there was belief that all tribal customs were sinful and church members discarded them. Today, EYN members are recognizing that traditions are a vital part of their history. Instead of denouncing all of their past culture, much of it is being used in forms of worship and celebration of Christ's love. This is attractive to people who have interest in Christianity, as well as maintaining a link to their past.

Challenges facing EYN

EYN is facing many issues today that will shape its progress into the 21st century. As Donna Forbes Steiner pointed out during a tour group fellowship meal with EYN members, many of these issues are parallel to concerns of the Church of the Brethren. Church growth, reaching congregations at the local level, a leadership shortage, need for identity . . . does any of this sound familiar?

(75) The rapid growth of EYN continues with an estimated 8,000 new members baptized each year. According to the new book *The Progressive History of EYN*, 1997 statistics show membership has risen to 140,000, with average Sunday worship attendance reaching 240,000 people. While this is cause for celebration, it also gives rise to some concern. Yakubu B. Bwala, director of Mason Technical School, said in a speech earlier this year that although EYN is

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Looking back

BY NVWA BALAMI

At the beginning of this century, revival sermons and missionary campaigns swept across Europe and the new lands. Church bodies saw new visions and became sensitive to the needs of people in other lands, especially Africa. Consequently, the Church of the Brethren in America sent Albert Helser and Stover Kulp to Nigeria in early 1923.

They made their first home under one tamarind tree and began to preach the gospel, heal sickness, and make friends with the local people. They endeavored and preached under the scorching sun of the tropics which was unfamiliar to them, but saw few respond to their sermons.

On March 17, 1948, the church planting was celebrated. However, the joy of the Silver Jubilee was like the celebration of a child who could not understand the meaning. The Foreign Mission Secretary, Leland Brubaker and company, were present that afternoon, but hardly did the local people understand the message. But the church had been established and hope was perceived.

Yet another jubilee came on March 17, 1973, recognizing the child's maturity. The hope of the planter was fulfilled. The joy of the local people was being recognized by the American church. The understanding that Nigerians could make independent decisions and lead their church was thrilling. The symbolic handover of instruments of power to the nationals was the climax of the occasion.

On March 17, 1998, all roads led to the tamarind tree at Garkida, the home of the first Brethren missionaries in Africa. It is now 75 years since the first planting of the church. There were many visitors—Emirs, government officials, and sundry others. The understanding is that the Nigerian church is now and forever.

This was a celebration of history and affirming the roots of the people. By the tamarind tree, local people will rejoice for their faith in Christ, a time to remember coming out of darkness into light. The Diamond Jubilee allows the church to look into the millennium age, and to move into West Africa, where Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN—Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) may play an even greater role.

A graduate of Bethany Theological Seminary, Nvwa Balami has been a pastor, a teacher, and a principal of Kulp Bible College. He has recently started a new congregation in Nigeria's largest city, Lagos.

Nigerian workcamps: Bridging the gap

BY SUE GRUBB

It may be difficult to believe that hauling pans of cement on your head for hours on end, unbending old nails for reuse, or separating a big heap of stones by size into smaller piles would lead to spiritual growth. Although these tasks seem tedious and mundane in our society, in Nigeria they are ways of working together and slowly moving forward to accomplish a task greater than anyone involved . . . a process we often forget in the fast-paced, time-is-money, fully-automated United States.

Since the inception of the Nigerian workcamp in 1985, the Church of the Brethren has been sending volunteers to Nigeria to work alongside Nigerians to build necessary structures for Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria). In 1991 Swiss and German volunteers from Basel Mission, a fraternal organization of EYN, joined the effort, to form a truly international workcamp.

Since 1985, buildings have been constructed for many programs in EYN. The buildings have included a new wing added onto the national administrative building, staff housing, a grinding shop, crop storage, and agriculture buildings, and a store, all at EYN Headquarters near Mubi, in northeastern Nigeria. Student and staff housing has been built at Kulp Bible College, also at this location. In 1997 a four-classroom building for the new EYN Comprehensive Secondary School was built, and in February the 1998 workcamp erected a dormitory for the students of the school.

Each year EYN chooses the work project, and the Church of the Brethren and Basel Mission join them in providing funds for the necessary building materials.

Although financial support is important to EYN, the workcamp is much more than just a means of funding. It is an opportunity for those visiting from the United States to increase their awareness of EYN. The workcamp schedule is arranged so that time is set aside for attending church services and other functions; meeting pastors, church leaders and members; learning about EYN national programs; and visiting sites important to the history of EYN and the Church of the Brethren.

There were 21 workcampers—5 from the US, one from Germany, and 15 Nigerians. They were special guests at a new church commissioning in Gulak, about 1–1/2 hours by road to the north of EYN headquarters. Fellowship meals were shared with congregations during the several days they took to travel across northern Nigeria, from Kano in the north central region, to EYN headquarters in the northwest. Current EYN programs visited by the workcampers included Kulp Bible College, Mason Technical School, EYN Secondary School, and the Rural Development Programme, which provides services in the areas of well-digging, rural health, and agriculture. The historic tamarind tree, site of the first the Church of the Brethren preaching in Nigeria in 1923, gave the group a connection to the past. They also visited former mission homes, the Garkida Leprosarium (now operated by the Nigerian government), and other institutions begun by the Church of the Brethren.

Additionally, the workcamp is a forum for EYN members to learn more about the Church of the Brethren. Mostly this has been done through many informal conversations, but there have also been arranged question and answer sessions to exchange information about the two denominations. This year Wayne Zunkel and Paul Nye, both Brethren pastors, were invited to preach at Sunday worship services, giving another opportunity to share Brethren beliefs.

The Rev. Karagama Gadzama, EYN vice president, feels that a gap has formed over the past few decades between the Church of the Brethren and EYN. Since EYN became indigenized in 1973, the number of US Brethren serving as full-time fraternal workers in Nigeria has decreased significantly, from more than a hundred in the 1960s to a handful now. Yet, Gadzama says that EYN members have high hopes of a renewed connection and a stronger relationship with the Church of the Brethren in the future.

He believes that it is the Church of the Brethren workcampers who are bridging this gap. They are a visible presence and reminder that the Church of the Brethren still cares about EYN. During the workcamp, Brethren from the US and Nigeria come face to face. Through personal interaction, the denominations have become real to each other, rather than merely images based on an article read or a story heard. EYN—and all its struggles, joys, frustrations, accomplishments, and the indomitable faith of its members—comes to life for US Brethren who work alongside church members in Nigeria. And as Brethren beliefs and culture are shared, the US church becomes a more tangible reality to Nigerians as well.

Preparations are under way for the 14th annual workcamp in Nigeria. The tentative dates for the workcamp are January 16 to February 16, 1999.

The workcamp will focus on the construction of a secondary school near the EYN Headquarters. Workcampers will also have the opportunity to eat, socialize, and work with Nigerian workcampers. Other activities include visits to local churches, participating in cultural events, and traveling in Nigeria. Participation is limited, so register early.

For additional information, contact the Global Missions Partnerships Office of the Church of the Brethren in Elgin at 800 323-8039, ext. 226 or Jeff Mumman, workcamp coordinator, at 717 367-2269.

What do sisters say to each other?

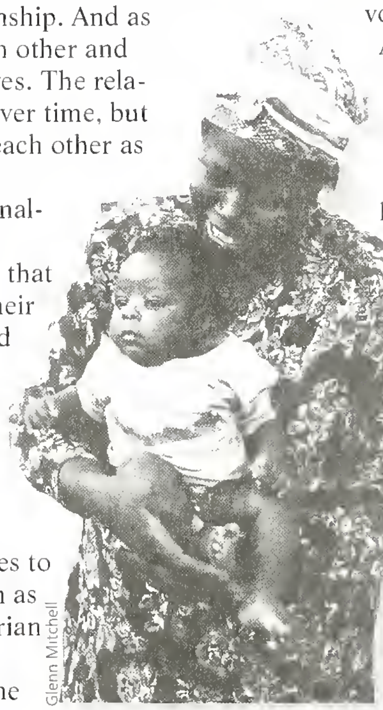
By Mervin Keeney

Sometimes when Nigerians have asked me where the relationship between the American and Nigerian branches of the church is headed, I offer an analogy. When sisters are children, they play together. As teenagers or young adults, sisters may compete with each other, asserting their emerging identity, and there may be a bit of tension in the relationship. And as older adults, sisters respect each other and relish sharing in each other's lives. The relationship changes and matures over time, but sisters will always be sisters to each other as long as they live.

People are reassured by this analogy that the bond between us is permanent, if evolving. I realize that my response does not answer their question specifically, but instead reaffirms the relationship. But since valuing and honoring the relationship is more important to Nigerians than particulars of directions, these words reassure.

The Nigerian church continues to view the Church of the Brethren as the mother church. In the Nigerian culture, the mother is accorded great respect and honor. At some points in our history together this cultural factor, coupled with wealth and power dynamics, has resulted in a lopsided relationship. We did not relate as sisters, but as parent and child. During recent decades the American church has sought to relate to the Nigerian church as a sister church of equal value.

Where might this relationship take us? The Nigerian church may soon be as large as the American church. Does this change our sense of who we are? For example, for decades we saw ourselves as an exclusively American church. How does it alter our identity to recognize fully the large Nigerian branch, as well as new growth in Dominican Republic?


Glenn Mitchell

We have much to learn about Christian faithfulness from our sisters and brothers in Nigeria. We can also be energized by what God is doing in Nigeria. Rather than a withered vine that no longer offers anything, the relationship in Nigeria is at a point of harvest, a time when we might receive nourishment from each other.

Rather than proposing a personal agenda, let me convey hopes and visions Nigerians have voiced to me in recent years. Perhaps the American church can learn from the Women's Fellowship (ZME), which has been identified by both Nigerians and visitors as a central force in the church. The highly successful church-planting efforts by the Nigerian church could be another good example.

Both Nigerians and Americans have wondered whether the Nigerian church should send missionaries to America. Nigerians have also expressed interest in doing mission together in Africa, and specifically working together in Sudan. The participation of EYN pastor James Zoaka with the Church of the Brethren peace group to Sudan this past January was an important step for Nigerian church leadership to participate directly in our Sudan ministry. More such linkages between Nigeria and Sudan can be made. Southern Nigeria has a cultural link with Brazil, rooted in the slave trade of centuries past. Perhaps working together with the Nigerian church among the Brazilian population has potential to rekindle the somewhat dormant relationship begun in Brazil some years ago.

May it be said at the 100th anniversary that during the preceding quarter century we drew upon the abundant gifts of faith of our sister church in Nigeria, and they from us, so that both sisters will have been nourished and renewed.

Mervin Keeney serves as the General Board's director for Global Mission Partnerships.

(continued from page 12) showing quantitative growth, there must also be emphasis on qualitative growth. EYN secretary general Bitrus Bdlia believes that with the rapid growth that EYN is experiencing, a new administrative plan will be needed to serve the larger population. Creating zones with regional leadership to keep in close contact with local congregations is one possibility. The emphasis will be on keeping EYN intact and unified, while continuing to work towards expansion.

- Growth raises the issue of providing quality leadership. At present there are only about a fourth of the ordained pastors needed to serve in EYN places of worship. Although EYN continues to train more leaders, lack of funding for this growth will make it difficult to meet the rising needs.
- EYN is also struggling with its sense of identity. It shares common practices with other denominations and there is concern that young people are not understanding the unique qualities of EYN.
- EYN is influenced by the political situation in Nigeria, a country riddled with military coups and unrest since its independence in 1960. The Rev. Toma H. Ragnjiya, principal of Kulp Bible College, believes that this military intervention has broken the continuity necessary for building Nigeria into a unified nation. As a result of financial mismanagement at the national level, high inflation and low cash flow are causing Nigeria's people to suffer economically. Misappropriated government funds for development programs, as well as the collapsed educational system, have made it imperative that EYN and other religious groups step in and take over where the government is failing. In the past, politics was seen as dirty and business dealings as unchristian, so EYN drew away from them. But now, Ragnjiya says, there must be more encouragement for EYN members to become educated in politics and economics, and to get involved.

EYN looks to the future

When I asked members about their vision for EYN in the upcoming years, two responses came frequently:

- More education at all levels is a priority, providing primary education for all children and continuing education for those who want to learn, regardless of their economic situation. Also, growth in pastor training is necessary to move toward solving the leadership crisis, as well as to challenge competent members to use their talents for the good of the church.
- Continued efforts in evangelism and growth in EYN are also part of the vision. Since EYN is primarily a rural denomination, emphasis will be on movement into the cities, as well as spreading across the nation. Bdlia expects to see EYN covering Nigeria by its 100th anniversary and moving beyond the nation's borders. This is a continuation of Stover Kulp's vision, which was to train Nigerians to evangelize their own people. According to Gadzama, "We will not hide our faith anymore. Now we'll go everywhere. We want to be known."

Sue Grubb grew up in the Elizabethtown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren and is a graduate of Juniata College. She served five years (1992-1997) in Brethren Volunteer Service, two of which she spent teaching fourth grade at Hillcrest School in Jos, Nigeria. Recently, she returned to Nigeria for two months to participate in the 1998 workcamp and to attend the EYN 75th Anniversary Celebration.

Sue Grubb, *center, with fellow Nigeria workcamp participants Asabe Bulus, left, and Jessica David.*

IN A FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER IN BELFAST, BVS WORKER MELISSA MAGEE TEACHES CHILDREN THEY CAN BE SAFE AND LOVED.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
JEFF LEARD

Taking the chill off Belfast

Brethren Volunteer Service workers warm hearts in Northern Ireland

"Just being with the kids makes it all worthwhile."

MELISSA MAGEE WITH HER "MAIN PRIORITY."

With the heat cranked up in her 16-passenger bus, Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) worker Melissa Magee navigates a familiar route through working-class neighborhoods of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Her passengers are an unlikely mix of Catholic and Protestant mothers and children, and, as they get on the bus, Melissa greets them all with a warm smile and friendly conversation about the latest developments in their lives.

Outside the bus Belfast is cold in December. Coal-burning stoves fill the already gray sky with a low-lying haze and a familiar, dirty scent. Working folks are wrapped from head to toe in dark winter garments and schoolchildren in woolly uniforms step to a brisk pace on their daily walk to school.

Partition walls, separating Loyalist and Nationalist factions, crisscross the city. Their very presence deepens the chill of the morning. Graffiti and colorful murals along these barriers are a melancholy reminder of the lethal conflict that has been waged in Northern Ireland since the 17th century.

Melissa and her passengers are on their way to a bi-weekly program at Quaker Cottage family support center on a nearby hill, where mothers participate in group-sharing, receive staff support, and participate in various projects while their children receive their own regimen of support. The program is designed to bring Catholic and Protestant families together by improving the coping skills of mothers.

But the children are Melissa's main priority. "Just being with the kids makes it all worthwhile," she said. The progress made in children over the course of a year may be indiscernible. "You can't say, 'See, look, that's what we did.' There's no tangible thing that you can grasp onto . . . . But the kids know that there is another way of life—they don't have to be smacked. They can talk to people and be safe in a secure environment where they are loved and there is no interference."

One of the children who has been close to Melissa is a very active little three-year-old boy named Bradley, who is hated by his mother. When he was recently placed in the intensive care unit of a local hospital with a severe illness, Melissa stayed with him every day and monitored his progress. Though he was unconscious for much of the time, his mother visited him only once.

"It is hard to see how she treats her kids and not hold it against her, but we're not just getting the moms up here and telling them what to do," said Melissa. "It's more support—trying to help the whole family together. This is the only center in Belfast that has this kind of approach."

As an American, Melissa has held a special status among the Northern Irish. "Either side will warm to you and tell you their problems and try to

(continued on page 19)

The joys and concerns of youth work in Northern Ireland

Aaron Durnbaugh and Jessica Lehman are Brethren Volunteer Service volunteers working with Belfast youth in the Northern Ireland Children's Holiday Scheme (NICHS), a program designed to improve cross-community relations and provide youth with opportunities to develop leadership skills. Their work takes place in an unassuming building that plays host to a chaotic youth event nearly every night.

Jessica and Aaron, both from Elgin, Ill., where they are members of the Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren, focus their efforts on the Community Partnership Project, which brings youth together from the North and the South and from Nationalist and Loyalist communities for activities, retreats, and discussions with community leaders.

"It's good to be in on the creative side of things," Aaron said about organizing the events, "but I really love the youth work part. I love to be in a room of screaming kids. You get frustrated and exhausted, but that's when it's the most fun."

Jessica decided to join BVS because "in college it just felt like something was missing. I didn't have an overwhelming sense that it was where I was supposed to be," she said. "When I went to different church conferences and heard about BVS, it just felt right. . . ." As a member of the Church of the Brethren Peace Team last summer, she felt the call to act on her interests and made up her mind to join BVS.

Aside from their other responsibilities at the youth center, Jessica and Aaron both work on a community drama project. Rehearsals are on Monday nights, and Jessica has enjoyed her involvement in the production.

Life in Northern Ireland has not always been fun for the volunteers, however, and the political situation has affected them differently. "I find it very interesting the changes that come over kids when they go back to their communities where paramilitary forces are present," said Jessica. "Sometimes the girls will talk at the retreats about how they are great friends, but if they would meet in the local mall they wouldn't acknowledge one another. It's really sad because we should be building bridges so that they are comfortable together outside our structure."

"I've been scared a few times," Aaron said about the conflict. In passing from a Nationalist to a Loyalist area early in his BVS term, he and a friend were mistaken for Nationalists and were threatened. In July, he was also living in a neighborhood where petrol bombs were thrown and other violence occurred during a series of riots across the peace lines.

Jessica and Aaron both hope that their work will help further the cause of peace by building bridges between Loyalist and Nationalist communities in Northern Ireland. Much of this interaction takes place during weekend "residentials," where youth come together from the North and the South and from different communities within Northern Ireland. According to Jessica, "They are a cross between retreat and camp—hell, basically—a real pain for the youth workers."

Aaron agrees that the residentials are a challenge. "It's really exciting to get to know a lot of different sides of myself that I didn't have before," said Aaron. "I'm adding to my interpersonal skills every time I have a residential and the kids are screaming and it's 4 in the morning and I'm exhausted. I'm drawing from new reserves of humility and patience."

BVS has been an educational experience for both volunteers. "Volunteering isn't about taking time off," Aaron concluded. "I'm learning to be a youth worker every day here."—Jeff Leard

AARON DURNBAUGH WORKS WITH YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT.

JESSICA LEHMAN, CENTER, WORKS THE SNACK STAND DURING A NIGHTLY DROP-IN GATHERING.

"Volunteering is something that feels right to me"

CHILDREN ARE CARED FOR WHILE MOTHERS PARTICIPATE IN GROUP-SHARING.

AFTER HER SESSIONS ON IMPROVING COPING SKILLS, A MOTHER PICKS UP HER CHILD FROM MAGEE.

(continued from page 17)

get you to agree with them," she said. "Generally people love Americans and they love to make fun of Americans and they love to criticize Americans—especially the accent."

Melissa, a Catholic whose home is in Yorkville, Ill., began volunteering at the age of 20. She is now 26 and has done projects in California, Illinois, and two others in Northern Ireland. She attended University of Chicago for a year and a half, but soon changed her mind about the need for education and wanted to work with people doing something positive.

"I don't like money. If I get money then I'll just want to spend it on lots of stuff I don't need and fall into the trap of consumerism," she said. Volunteering "is just something that feels right to me."

But it has not always been easy work, she admits. "It takes a lot out of you and there are a lot of problems with the families." Living at the center has also been a challenge, since Melissa is constantly reminded about problems in the families that come to the center. "You have to learn to draw the line about becoming attached. It's really hard to have your own life outside of work."

In a few months, Melissa will finish her term in BVS and will return to the US. "I'm looking forward to going home," she said. But "I have no idea what I'm going to do. It will be hard to leave because I've grown attached to the place and I feel really settled here. I will miss the people and the place—moms and friends."

In spite of pressure from her parents, Melissa has no plans to take up a more traditional lifestyle. "My parents have given up on me," she said. "They would still like to see me get a real job and have a family and settle down, but for now that's not what I want."

For the warmth she provides to mothers and children in the very cold city of Belfast, it is probably just as well.

Jeff Leard stopped off in Northern Ireland on his way home to the US from a Brethren Volunteer Service assignment in Cyprus. There he was managing editor for the Middle East Council of Churches. Originally from Glendale, Calif., Jeff is currently working as a frelance photojournalist in southern Pennsylvania. He is a member of the Church of the Brethren.

Nevin Dulabaum

Fred Borne *(right) talks to three Tijuana children last July during the Pleasant Dale congregation's service project in Mexico.*

Beans and rice and Jesus Christ

BY JOEL ULRICH

"They're going to cut your hair, brother!" may not come across at first as the most consoling thing to say to a long-haired fellow such as myself embarking on a new undertaking. This would not be the last time that I would be surprised.

Having grown up in a neatly mowed middle-class suburb of Chicago, I was nervous but elated. I had decided to spend my summer through the Ministry Summer Service program with pastor Gilbert Romero in East Los Angeles, a predominantly Hispanic inner-city neighborhood just east of downtown. I worked and lived primarily with the men in the Bittersweet Christian Rehabilitation Home next door to the Bella Vista Church of the Brethren where about 70 percent of the congregation are recovering drug addicts. This home and its inhabitants have forever opened my eyes.

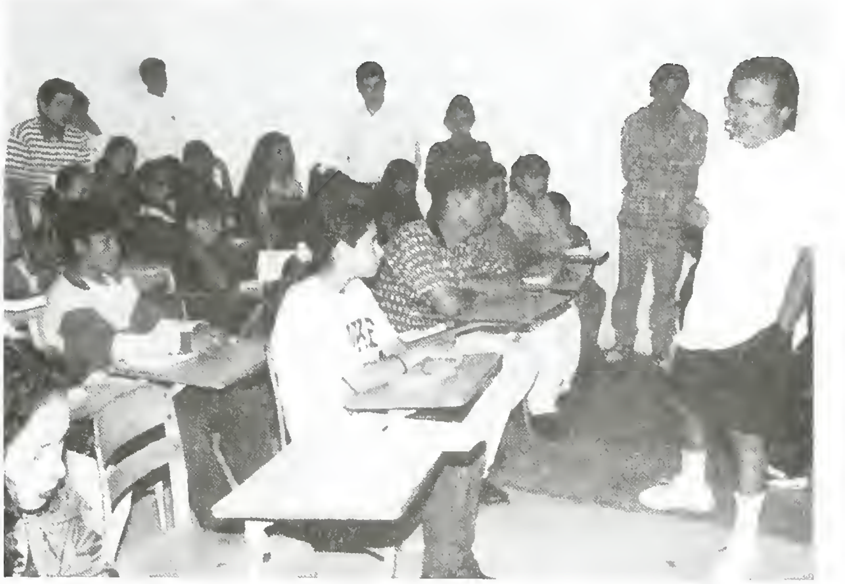
Through the summer, I saw these rigorous-Christian ideas at work in the men, improving their relationships with others in the program and with their families.

The Bittersweet Home was started by Romero and the Bella Vista church around twelve years ago, and since then a thousand men have walked through its doors. Last summer I had the opportunity to meet about twenty of them. I entered new worlds that I had not experienced previously: drug addiction, gang affiliation, prison culture, inner-city life, child emancipation, and a more rigorous Christianity than I had ever known back in my Chicago suburb.

By the second day, I had written in my diary, "Of all the skills which I have learned in life, I have to admit they have all become irrelevant here." I felt that nothing I had previously learned could help me there. All my previous skills probably were irrelevant but two: listening and the willingness to learn.

About half the men in Bittersweet were using the program as an alternative to prison sentencing from

Stan Koenemann *(top) and David Liby of the Pleasant Dale church paint the front of a Tijuana house in which a Centro Infantil Shalom student lives.*



Nevin Dulabaum

Gilbert Romero *in June teaches a weekly Bible study lesson for high school students at Centro Infantil Shalom. Over 200 local children, ages 5 to 20, participate in Shalom ministries. Nine out of 10 of these children do not have fathers.*

minor offenses such as drug use or theft. If they left the house they would have to return to prison. The other half of the men have come to the home voluntarily in the desire to change their lives. "Life changing" is a hard business, however. How do you erase a lifestyle that you have lived for the past 25 years?

I learned at Bittersweet how useful a more conservative or literal approach to Christianity could be in providing a foundation for people who have no foundation to call their own. It seemed more and more evident to me that the main stumbling block that these men hit again and again is that they had no hope, no real belief that they could change themselves. "This is simply how life is," they would tell me. Life usually means growing up in an unstable family, joining a gang (your "real" family) in adolescence, living in and out of prisons, having "happiness" be dictated by the presence or absence of drugs, and not living to see your 25th birthday.

Gilbert Romero, however, represents the alternative. He is the foremost example of a success story—someone who has hit rock bottom and come back to lead a prodigious life as he works against the "craziness" all around him, even becoming a national leader as a current member of the Church of the Brethren General Board.

The men at the home participate in daily Bible studies, some led by members of the church and others by the men themselves. The foundation that these men can rebuild their lives on is made of several building blocks: Alcoholics Anonymous, Lion Tamers (a Christianized twelve-step program), car washes, and Bible study and ice cream at Grandma and Grandpa's, the wonderful elder couple of the church.

Through the summer, I saw these rigorous-Christian ideas at work in the men, improving their relationships with others in the program and with their families when they would come to visit. The worship of God makes a vast improvement in the lives of men who had previously worshiped gods of money, drugs, and pride. The road is hard. Romero once said that perhaps only one in a hundred who have attended his program will really end up changing his life.

Even if a participant gets turned around at Bittersweet, often upon leaving he would just return to the same environment that had been the source of his problems in the past. Various men whom I met were even "green-lighted," meaning that they were targeted by another gang, so it would be unsafe for them to return to their communities. Therefore, Romero has sought relocation as a solution. He has sent various men out of L.A. to other Church of the Brethren contacts in the country, so that these men may truly start their lives anew and not spiral back down to the conditions that put them in the home in the first place.

I was not the only visitor whose eyes were opened last summer. A couple from the Locust Grove Church of the Brethren in Maryland visited in early June, and then an entire work group from Pleasant Dale Church of the Brethren in Decatur, Ind., came a week before Annual Conference in Long Beach to do renovations on the church.

That week I accompanied them down to see Shalom, a children's

Nevin Dulabaum

Ryan Hirschy, *Denny Leyse, Joel Ulrich, and a Centro Infantil Shalom pastoral leader take turns digging out a latrine in a valley on the outskirts of Tijuana, where the poorest of the poor live. This valley is being considered for a second Centro Infantil Shalom facility.*

Nevin Dulabaum

Joel Ulrich *and Elias Ocejuera, a 17-year-old pastor at Centro Infantil Shalom, discuss the logistics of painting the front of this woman's house. At left is Terry Shumaker, pastor of Pleasant Dale Church of the Brethren.*

center across the border in Tijuana, Mexico, where Romero visits periodically and brings food and clothes. There we performed various volunteer tasks for families in the area who had children related to the program. We visited a local landfill and the people who lived there. They had the lowest living standards that I have ever seen and ever thought possible.

> *The Bittersweet Home was started by Romero and the Bella Vista church around twelve years ago, and since then a thousand men have walked through its doors.*

I also helped lead the youth program at Annual Conference down to Shalom on Saturday for an enraptured and eye-opening international work project experience. Various people from Pleasant Dale are now contributing directly to children at the Shalom center, and one of the offerings at this summer's National Youth Conference will be going to Shalom.

Bittersweet Home is expected to soon become a Brethren Volunteer Service project.

Romero has worked with Compañeros en Ministerio (Partners in Ministry) for the past few years, forming relationships and bonds of communication with various churches such as Pleasant Dale across the country. Romero has also toured the country, visiting churches, high schools, and camps in an effort to share with others awareness of the gang and drug lifestyles that exist all around him.

The Church of the Brethren sometimes appears to be a "monocultural" denomination. Romero's involvement in East L.A. and Tijuana, as well as our other inner-city or intercultural churches across the nation, offers a huge resource and opportunity not to be missed by the larger church.

One of Romero's most exhilarating sermons that summer focused on every one of us needing to continually try to break out of our "comfort zones" in our spiritual walk with God and in the world. I for one had achieved that, sometimes painfully, this summer. The experience has been without question the hardest and most rewarding experience that I have ever had. And my "rite of passage" had been correctly predicted by Romero. My parents were more than surprised upon my return home with a wonderful buzz-cut hair job from Mark, my bunkmate at the Bittersweet Home.

Joel Ulrich is a sophomore at Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn., studying international political development and Latin American studies. Originally from York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard, Ill., he plans to study in Quito, Ecuador, in the fall.

Holy impatience

William Sloane Coffin's message to US churches

BY FLETCHER FARRAR

A Passion for the Possible: A Message to US Churches. Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, Ky. 1993. 88 pages.

Brethren like good preaching and appreciate the prophetic voice directed at the unenlightened. We'll see how much we like that voice directed at us when William Sloane Coffin, former pastor of New York's Riverside Church and former president of Peace Action, steps into the pulpit on Friday night of this year's Annual Conference in Orlando.

He might make us squirm.

Not only does Coffin keep pushing churches to the forefront of the great political and social battles of today, like economic disparity and homophobia, he also reminds his audiences that the struggles of yesterday—over the environment, nuclear arsenals, and racism—are still unresolved. For those who are feeling pretty good about a strong economy, the end of the cold war, and a relatively progressive administration in Washington, Coffin may be tiresome.

But he's right. And the message that the church is uniquely well-positioned to advance the cause of justice should give new energy to the tired and hope to the timid. "It is time we stop retreating from the giant social issues of the day into the pygmy world of private piety," Coffin writes in his 1993 book, *A Passion for the Possible: A Message to U.S. Churches.* "I believe the religious community has the saving vision."

And if we don't quite have it, Coffin helps us get it. "The primary religious task these days is to try to think straight," he writes. "Seeing clearly is more important even than good behavior, for redemptive action is born of vision."

Used with permission Westminster/John Knox Press.

William Sloane Coffin

And then in nine short essays Coffin outlines his views and his challenge to churches on subjects including war, the environment, race, sexism, homophobia, and abortion. Though few will agree with all his points, Coffin's work challenges Christians to know their own views on all these subjects so they can "think straight" too.

Not that straight. On the issue of homophobia, Coffin equates it with bigotry, on a par with racism and sexism. He is accustomed to hearing pleas for "patience" with churches, for it will take time for them to accept homosexuality. But, he answers, when homes, schools, and churches turn their backs on gay and lesbian people and the problems and discrimination they often must endure, churches should exercise "holy impatience."

What about the Bible? "In abolishing slavery and in ordaining women we've gone beyond biblical literalism," he writes. "It's time we did the same with gays and lesbians. The problem is not how to reconcile homosexuality with scriptural passages that condemn it, but rather how to reconcile the rejection and punishment of homosexuals with the love of Christ."

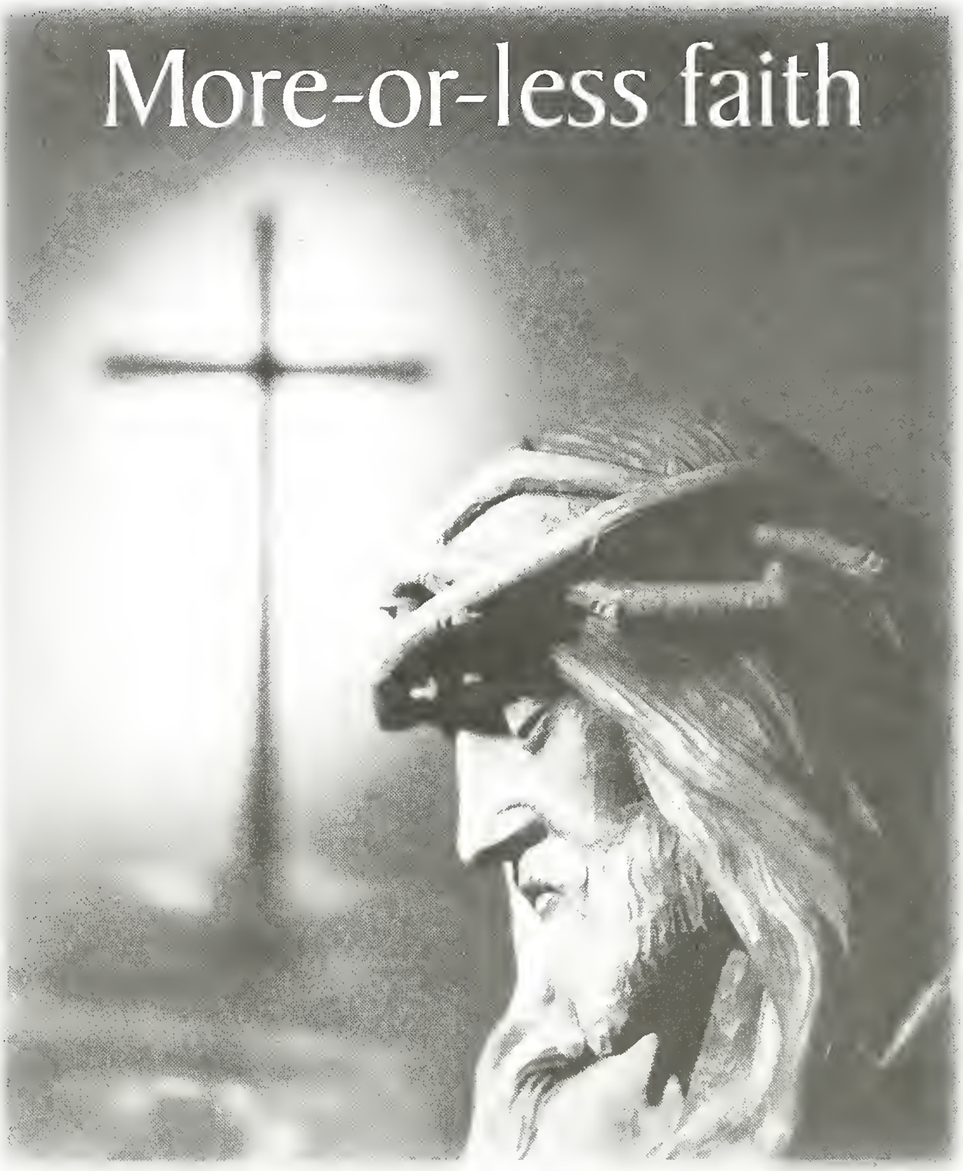
In his chapter "Beyond War," Brethren will find much to commend. Recounting the economic and spiritual devastation of the cold war, he urges peacemakers to begin a new abolition movement aimed at nuclear weapons. And along with its weapons, the US should give up the pride and prestige that accompany them. "Churches should see that it is our pride-swollen faces that close up our eyes, that no nation is well served by illusions of its righteousness."

With less pride and power, this nation will realize that it has sin in common with other nations. "As with individuals, so with nations, their salvation lies not in being sinless but in believing that there is more mercy in God than sin in us." Coffin urges preemptive "humanitarian intervention" to stop wars before they start, and adds, "Mediation must become the order of the day."

In an epilogue he calls "A Word to Preachers," Coffin gives some hint of how he may preach to the Brethren. In the face of injustice, pastors cannot remain silent, but "we should challenge people kindly."

"If we who are preachers want our people to lend us their ears, we must first give them our hearts," he writes. "And if we do, then because of our love for them we shall never be afraid to put at risk their love for us." *M.*

More-or-less faith



H Armstong Roberts

BY KENNETH L. GIBBLE

Some years back a survey on religious beliefs in the heartland of America was taken. One of the questions on the survey dealt with belief in the resurrection of Jesus. Some gave as an answer an emphatic "yes," some gave an emphatic "no." But a great many answered that, yes, they believed in Jesus' resurrection, *more or less.*

Is that where you fit in? Are you *more or less* a person of faith? Someone who truly believes and someone who just as truly doubts?

This is nothing new, to live with the push and pull that is faith and doubt. Thomas was the disciple who said he would not believe Jesus was alive unless he could see with his own eyes the nailprints and touch with his own fingers the wounds on his master's body. Thomas was not the first nor the last person who sometimes believed and sometimes could not believe. Thomas stands for everyone caught in a world where things are not what they should be, often not even what they seem to be.

You and I know who Thomas is. Thomas is ourselves.

Instead of simply feeling guilty about your more-or-less faith, consider the important role doubt has to play in your spiritual life.

Think of it this way. A very small child who accepts without question what a parent says does not really have faith. Genuine faith can happen only after you have experienced disappointment, when you've lived through the pain of broken promises. Faith is possible only for people who have had their innocence shattered. Faith is possible only for those who have doubted.

What are some good things to be said for doubt? For one thing, doubt requires a certain kind of courage, especially when everyone around you is a believer. To doubt is to weigh the evidence for yourself when you think people around you are deluding themselves. True faith cannot exist when doubt isn't around to ask the hard questions.

Doubt keeps faith from becoming rigid and sterile. If what you believe goes unchallenged for a long time, you have no incentive to learn, to grow.

There is something else to be said for doubt. There are plenty of people around perfectly willing to tell you what to believe, what to do. Doubt keeps you from simply swallowing what someone tells you is true.

Doubt has its place. But doubt also has its limitations.

In John's gospel, when doubting Thomas sees the risen Jesus, he exclaims, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus answers: "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

"Seeing is believing" goes the old saying. But the account in John's gospel disputes the old saying. Seeing is *not* believing.

Religious belief is more than allowing your senses to persuade you, more than intellectual assent. I believe dinosaurs once roamed the earth, but that belief doesn't affect my day-to-day existence. I believe George Washington crossed the Delaware, but that belief doesn't change my life.

Belief in God and in Jesus Christ is something different. So is believing in the resurrection, whether you believe it more or believe it less. This kind of believing is, as Frederick Buechner has put it (*Whistling in the Dark*, 1988):

> . . . less a position than a journey, less a realization than a relationship. It doesn't leave you cold like believing the world is round. It stirs your blood like believing the world is a miracle. It affects who you are and what you do with your life like believing your house is on fire or somebody loves you.

The real test of faith, after all, is not what one believes or doesn't believe. The real test of faith is what one does. Some have called faith a leap. You're hanging out a third-story window with the room behind you on fire. Down below a man holds out his arms. "Jump, I'll catch you," he says. You can believe with all your heart he will indeed catch you. You can even say it, "I believe you will catch me." But if you never jump, you are no better off than if you don't believe at all. Faith is the jump.

There are some good things to be said for doubt. But in the end, doubt by itself isn't enough. Anybody can play it safe. It doesn't take much character to stand on the sidelines and be cynical about everything. Maybe one of the reasons people opt for doubt over faith is that doubt doesn't cost them anything. Faith requires not only thought but effort. Faith in Christ, in fact, demands everything of you—your heart, your mind, your life.

But that faith doesn't simply demand everything. It *gives* everything. It gives your life purpose and meaning. It gives you joy even when sorrow comes your way. It gives you a peace the world cannot give nor can it take away.

This is what Christian faith really is—not so much something we choose to believe, but a gift. It's the grace to trust that the leap of life is not into a void—that, in the end, our lives are securely embraced by the everlasting arms of a loving God.

Kenneth L. Gibble, pastor of the Chambersburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, has been pastoring and writing, more or less, for the past 30 years.

Brethrening

Detestable Anabaptists!

Ordained Brethren minister Lee Krähenbühl took a position teaching theater and communications at Calvin College in Michigan several years ago. Calvin is a Christian Reformed Church college, and as a reformed institution it requires all tenure-track faculty to pledge they will adhere to the "Forms of Subscription." The "Forms of Subscription" is made up of three historic confessions including the Belgic Confession.

Lee told the college administration that Brethren don't sign oaths, believing that an agreement between Christians does not need the force of an oath to legitimate it. Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay. But he was doubly opposed to signing the "Forms of Subscription" when he read in Article 34 of the Belgic Confession that the Church "deplores the heinous error of the detestable Anabaptists." Lee went home and complained to his wife that this oath would seriously complicate his social life. "If I sign it, I'll have to hate myself!"

Fortunately, Lee was not martyred by the reformers like many 16th-century Anabaptists. In fact, he's been teaching at Calvin on a part-time basis ever since. —Julie Garber

Messenger would like to publish other short, colorful, and humorous stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submissions to Messenger, Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at ffarrar_gb@brethren.org.

Letters

Far from losing its ministry in its relocation to Richmond, Ind., Bethany has rediscovered its mission to train people for service in the Church of the Brethren.

Bethany made a good move

I'll introduce myself by saying I'm a lifelong member of the Lititz Church of the Brethren, Lititz, Pa., and I had the privilege of serving on the Bethany Theological Seminary Board of Trustees in the late 80s and early 90s. Furthermore, I served on the Relocation Committee when the decision was made to leave the Oak Brook campus. I'm responding to the articles in the March Messenger, "Remembering Bethany's Oak Brook Campus," "Ode to Old Bethany," and "The World Needs Brethren."

In the early 1990s Bethany found itself in a financial crisis directly impacted by the cost of maintaining the property in Oak Brook. Bethany had not achieved the size anticipated by the expansively designed campus. Because the campus had been designed for a seminary almost three times the size of Bethany, the buildings could not be maintained. They had deteriorated in ways noticeable to visitors and disconcerting to the Board of Trustees. The vision that built the campus was expansive, but the expansion of the Church of the Brethren drew to a close at the time the seminary opened in Oak Brook.

The Board of Trustees agonized over the decision to sell the property and relocate the seminary. Indeed, the board's agony delayed action long enough that the sale may have been more difficult than if they had chosen to act more quickly.

Although the trustees would like to have had the buildings upgraded for further use, no financially viable contract was ever presented to Bethany or its representatives that would have continued the use of the buildings. Some type of commercial development would be required. Now, fortunately, the land is sold. It will be developed for the benefit of the community as assessed by the Lombard Village Board. Both the Village Plan Commission and the Village Board voted unanimously to approve the needed zoning for Fountain Square of Lombard. As a part of its quality design, Fountain Square of Lombard will have far more "green space" than the village ordinance requires.

We are very grateful to Dennis Stine of The Shaw Company in Chicago and Thomas Karaba, Bethany's counsel. They stayed with Bethany throughout, giving their time and expertise to the very complicated sale of the property. Both gave Bethany much more than the contracted time.

Far from losing its ministry in its relocation to Richmond, Ind., Bethany has rediscovered its mission to train people for service in the Church of the Brethren. Bethany's partnership with the church has grounded its ministry training in Brethren congregations of all sizes and perspectives. Bethany's partnership with the Earlham School of Religion has promoted an effective ecumenical dialog that has strengthened the Brethren identity of Bethany. Bethany's partnership with area seminaries in Indiana and Pennsylvania allows its students to attend classes in various theological seminaries.

While joining Mr. Cassel, Mr. Brown, and Mrs. Weber in remembering fondly Bethany's past, we celebrate Bethany's current educational program. It is educationally effective, financially viable, and embodies the heritage of the Church of the Brethren.

Henry H. Gibbel
Lititz, Pa.

Generous helpings

The Chiques Church of the Brethren of Manheim, Pa., is to be commended for generosity in giving away holiday dinners (see "Tons of turkey," Messenger, March 1998). However, I am puzzled by some of the details.

The report said 11,073 pounds of turkey were used for 850 meals. That would be 13 pounds of turkey for each meal. After eating that much turkey, would there be any room left for one of the 850 pies?

Melvin Holt
Bloomington, Ill.

Old friends

We have been subscribers to the Messenger for many years through our Brethren churches, Middle District at Tipp City, Ohio, and West Charleston, Troy, Ohio, then back again to the Middle District Church of the Brethren. We helped build the Troy, Ohio, Brethren church and spent 25 years going there. My wife,

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations.

Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine.

We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer's name is kept in strictest confidence.

Address letters to MESSENGER *editor, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.*

Edith Rose, spent 25 years of her life at the new church as a Sunday School teacher. We still belong to the Middle District Church of the Brethren at Tipp City.

We were married April 19, 1932, oined Middle District church in November 1933, when we were asked to come forward and live a better life. Now we have been members of the Brethren 65 years, and very proud of it.

Now we are happy to say that on April 19 we are celebrating 66 years of marriage together. That contract said till death do you part from this ife together. We are now living in Greenville, Ohio, at the Brethren's Home, which is a very nice and pretty place to spend till death do us part.

If we make it to our birthdays this year we will be very happy. We are both June bugs. I will be 90 on June 30 and my good partner Edith Rose will be 84. You must work together as a good team.

Laurel D. Rose
Greenville, Ohio

Brethren caught napping

According to Wendy McFadden (See "From the publisher," March 1998), there are barely enough Brethren left to justify a Brethren publishing house. The church is withering. Compare this to a century ago when t was remarked that it wasn't clear which would take over the country first, the Dunkards or the starlings.

Why does a branch wither? Because it has been separated from the vine. For a church, life comes from the vine in the form of the Holy Spirit.

Gymnasiums, air conditioning, studies in feminist theologies, the atest program initiatives, and so on will do nothing but bleed the church dry and dissipate its remaining strength. Until we become filled with the Spirit, nothing will change for the better.

At one time we were the salt of the earth. We stood for some things, and stood against other things, and we knew what those things were. What's more we weren't much scared about what the world thought about it.

On page 16 of the March issue we see a cartoon drawn by a 10-year-old boy. "Yada yada yada," says the minister, and the Brethren doze. The Messenger then asks for "other short colorful and humorous stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren." The "real-life incident" here is not the cartoon but the Brethren caught in the act, and there is nothing humorous about it.

It is time to awake from our slumber. There is no power on earth that can hold back a church full of Spirit-filled believers.

James D. Kessler
Hershey, Pa.

Indiana geography lesson

In the March issue of Messenger, on page 16, in two different instances you show the Elkhart Valley Church of the Brethren as being located in Elkhart, Ind. This church is not located in Elkhart, it isn't even close. I don't know exactly how many miles it is, but it is located several miles south of Elkhart, and I think just a bit east. The Elkhart City Church of

Make plans now to attend the

MESSENGER DINNER

at Annual Conference

Sights, sounds, & stories from southern Sudan

July 2, 1998, Orlando, Florida

David R. Radcliff, director of Brethren Witness, delivers a multimedia report from the recent delegation visit to Sudan. Learn about the inspiring faith of Sudanese Christians and the new Brethren efforts to build a Partnership for Peace.

For dinner tickets, call the Annual Conference office at (800) 323-8039 or order from advance packet order form. Tickets also available in Orlando at Annual Conference ticket sales.

the Brethren is, of course, located in Elkhart, but not Elkhart Valley.

How do I know all this? Because at one time or another, each of these congregations was my parents' home church. You see, I was born at Elkhart, and when I was three, or thereabout, my parents moved to the vicinity of Elkhart Valley.

Several years ago, when Dean Heisey was pastor at Elkhart Valley, my wife and I visited him there. So you see, I'm familiar with the location of Elkhart Valley.

Don Snyder
Waynesboro, Va.

Editor's note: We asked Frank Ramirez, pastor of Elkhart Valley Church of the Brethren, to help us with this matter. He writes back:

The Elkhart Valley Church of the Brethren is located in Dunlap, an unincorporated part of Elkhart County, and depending on what road you take, is less than two miles from the city limits of Elkhart. The post office has given us an Elkhart mailing address, and that's close enough, literally, for government work.

My previous church, the Ladera Church of the Brethren, was located in Ladera Heights, an unincorporated part of Los Angeles County. It had a Los Angeles mailing address. When people asked me where I was from I said L.A. Now when they ask me where I live I say Elkhart.

The matter reminds me of the scholar who spent his whole life proving the Iliad and the Odyssey were not written by Homer, but by another Greek with the same name!

School of the Americas Watch

Reading the article "Speaking out for those already silenced," which appeared in the January/February Messenger, causes one to reflect how murder or genocide perpetrated against any living person is unconscionable and unchristian.

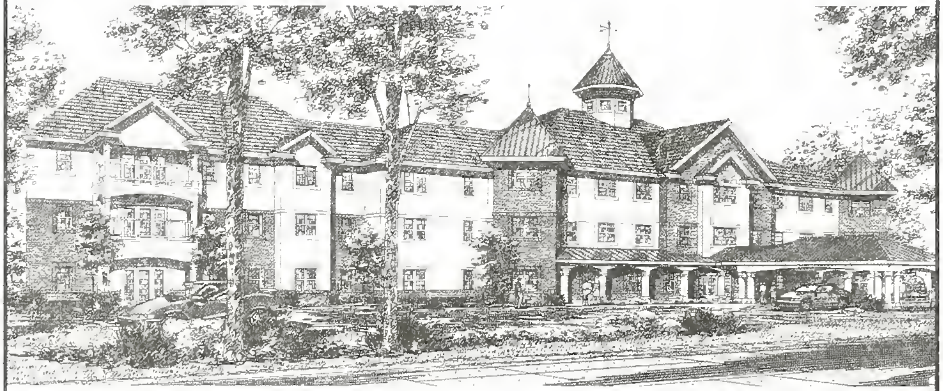
The manner in which the School of the Americas Watch was able to plan, organize, and promulgate a demonstration against the School of the Americas by an estimated 2,500 persons at Fort Benning, which climaxed with the trespass of 601 protesters into Fort Benning, was quite impressive. It made me think of what a powerful statement and witness as to the sanctity of life an action of that caliber can make.

But if the School of the Americas must be held accountable for the actions of some who attended it, should not medical schools, Planned Parenthood, and the National Organization for Women, who train or endorse people who perform abortions, be viewed in the same light? Has the School of the Americas Watch ever taken actions against those who murder unborn babies?

Jack Kruppenbach
New Holland, Pa.

A life of prayer

Thank you for printing David Wine's excellent piece in the January/February Messenger on how he is doing with his vow to spend an hour a day, a day a month, and a week a year in prayer. What a wise decision he has



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For more information, including a free color brochure, call Karen McNeal at 800 419-9129 or 540 828-2550. Come home to Maple Terrace.

BRIDGEWATER RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
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Bridgewater, Virginia

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Letters

nade! For me, Jesus' relationship vith God was indispensable to how Ie lived, for I believe His actions nd power flowed from this. Thus hould it be for us. As David said, alking about God is so different rom knowing God.

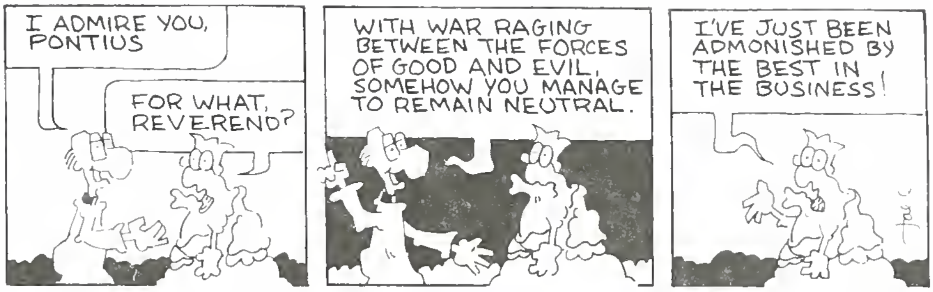
Recently I decided to take seriously he commandment to love God first, vhich for me would start with daily rayer and meditation. However, I ften found at the end of the day that asks and interruptions had had their vay with me. But I was determined. Iy solution has been to pray during he night, when I can easily lay aside he soap opera of my life and just njoy God for about an hour. Every ight I wake naturally between 3 and a.m., sit up straight in bed, and ome to God with a surrendered eart. Then it's back to sleep and weeter dreams.

I can testify to all the results of iving a life of prayer that David isted. They come quickly, too. It eems true that if we take one step oward God, He rushes to meet us. n addition, if we truly give ourselves o God and try to trust Him comletely, great and subtle changes take place in our lives. Right now I rejoice at being shown my hidden faults. And it seems that once shown, they are taken away with little or no effort on my part. Such is the love of our True Parent! Intention is key, I think, and when we really want to know, it is not withheld from us. I pray for God to keep purifying my heart and intention. Learning to know God has changed my life.

Christine Dull
Englewood, Ohio
Lower Miami Church of the Brethren

Pontius' Puddle

Send payment for reprinting "Pontius' Puddle" from Messenger *to Joel Kauffmann, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN 46526. $25 for one time use. $10 for second strip in same issue. $10 for congregations.*


I ADMIRE YOU, PONTIUS
FOR WHAT, REVEREND?
WITH WAR RAGING BETWEEN THE FORCES OF GOOD AND EVIL, SOMEHOW YOU MANAGE TO REMAIN NEUTRAL.
I'VE JUST BEEN ADMONISHED BY THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS!

Celebrate ethnic diversity

Upon receiving the January/February issue of the Messenger, we were surprised to see no mention was made of the recent Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration, nor was there any mention of February being designated as Black History Month.

Black History Month is dedicated to recognizing the achievements and contributions that African Americans have made to world history. Although many Black Americans regard this designation as a social paradox, it does serve to zero in on the positive influences of a people who still feel plagued by racism and conditional citizenship.

Although the Church of the Brethren is of German ancestry, it still has many diverse congregations. In the future would it be possible for ethnic recognition such as "Black History Month"?

Mary E. Jackson
Harbor City, Calif., and
Imperial Heights Church of the Brethren,
Los Angeles, Calif.

CHECK OUT ARIZONA!

Community Church of the Brethren
111 N. Sun Valley Boulevard
Mesa, AZ 85207 (602) 357-9811
Sunday Services 10:15 AM

Glendale Church of the Brethren
7238 N. 61st Avenue
Glendale, AZ 85301 (602) 937-9131
Sunday Services 10:30 AM

Phoenix First Church of the Brethren
3609 N. 27th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85016 (602) 955-8537
Sunday Services 10:45 AM

Tucson Church of the Brethren
2200 North Dodge Boulevard
Tucson, AZ 85716 (520) 327-5106
Sunday Services 10:30 AM

Messenger-on-Tape

Messenger is available on tape for people who are visually impaired. Each double cassette issue contains all articles, letters, and the editorial.

Messenger-on-Tape, is a service of volunteers for the Church and Persons with Disabilities Network (CPDN), a task group of the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC).

Recommended donation is $10 (if you return the tapes to be recycled) or $25 (if you keep the tapes.)

To receive Messenger-on-Tape, please send your name, address, phone number, and check payable to ABC to: Association of Brethren Caregivers, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120

Turning Points

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation.

Agape, Fort Wayne, Ind.: Neil and Vicki Groves, Amy Miller-Colburn, Greg Gause, Melissa Thomas, Kathy Barnhart, David Clifton
Ankeny, Iowa: Connie Burkholder, Loren Snyder, Terry and Marcy Davis, Jeff Holton
Arcadia, Ind.: Candace Chase, Amber Beard, Stephanie Beard, Jean Barker
Black Rock, Hanover, Pa.: Terry Nowlin, Jane Wilson, Anita Yanavitch, Greg Shaffer, Jason Werner, Brian Wildasin, Becky Fouts
Brandts, St. Thomas, Pa.: Alex and Jennifer Goods, Carey Grove, Allison Heckman, Jenae Mummert, Bob and Shari Ommert, Ashton Price, Jane Rhodes, Joni Stanton, Rachel Stanton
Bridgewater, Va.: Leanne Alley, Anthony Copper, David and Susan Huffman, Sarah Huffman, Kim Miller
Briery Branch, Dayton, Va.: Bill Pirece, Michele Pirece, Lanna Strawderman, Lorie Anderson, Donna Huffman, Ashley Auville, Brandon Cowens, Joel Cosner, Quinton Long, Sonya Milstead, Tyler Milstead, Christy Teter, Richard Pope, Ronald Guthrie, LaVerne Guthrie
Buffalo Valley, Mifflinburg, Pa.:Mike Kingston, Darlene Kingston, Angela Dye, Matt Dye, Tabitha Allen, Robert Fiske, Abigail Mullany
Central, Roanoke, Va.: Lynn Owens, Robert and Ruth Corekin, Clinton Haith
Chambersburg, Pa.: Lewis and Doris Fritz, Mike and Brenda Winklbauer, Terry and Doris Clopper
Dupont, Ohio: Rod Roehrle, Teresa Roehrle, Brittni Roehrle, Jennifer Roehrle, Andrea Webb, Erica Elkins, Brian Ladd, Mark Wise, Travis Rankin, Curtis Rayle
Eastwood, Akron, Ohio: Theodore Holt, Adrianne Holt, Shasta Staten
Green Tree, Oaks, Pa.: Anne-Dominique Haas, Lloyd and Esther Ziegler, Carol-Joyce Anton, Zoe Smith, Ed and Donna Brown, Jason and Jeff Brown, Caitlin Clark, David Guzik, Bryan O'Neill, Brad Keller, Jan and Nicholas Bryan, Shaner-Etzler family, Maggie Randall, Sam and Sue Tubiello
La Place, Ill.: Lois Walden
Midland, Va.: Isaac Beahm, David Ratliff, Kanda Ratliff, Carrie Carroll, Irene Frazier, Chester and Christina Stoltzfus
Moorefield, West Virginia: Lilli Steele, Michelle Lynn Phares, Mark Landon Phares, Cassandra Michael Steele, Richard James Ketterman Jr., Michael Harold High Jr.
Myerstown, Pa.: Earl and Shirley Brandt, Suzanne Kiguru, Nancy Yonker, William and Janet Post, Mark Bomberger, Scott Bomberger, Michelle Dohner, Braden Brubaker
Myerstown, Pa.: William and Joanne Muth
Pleasant Dale, Decatur, Ind.: Ed and Cherie Gage, Rachel Ehrsam
Ross, Mendon, Ohio: Sallyanne Calvert, Karen Knepper
University Park, Hyattsville, Md.: Robert and Roberta Gammon
Waynesboro, Va.: David Isbell, Wanda Isbell, Ray Banas, Pat Banas, Ricky Mundy, Lindsay Snider, Buddy Decker, Pam Decker, Angel Auman
Welty, Smithburg, Md.: Janet Hess, Michael Hurley
Yellow Creek, Goshen, Ind.: Phil Sechrist
Zion Hill, Columbiana, Ohio: Tina Simpson, Ashley Lynn McCoy

Wedding Anniversaries

Appleby, Theodore and Georgetta, Harrisburg, Pa., 50
Bane, William and Velma, Burlington, W. Va., 50
Bather, John and Wanda, Elgin, Ill., 50
Bixler, R. Russell and Norma, Pittsburgh, Pa., 50
Brechbill, Roy and Anna, Chambersburg, Pa., 60
Bricker, Andy and Gail, Chambersburg, Pa., 60
Carpentier, Jesse and Virginia, Brightwood, Va., 50
Carter, John and Phyllis, Goshen, Ind., 50
Cheek, Calvin and Hilda, Richmond, Ind., 60
Chewning, James and Claudine, Roanoke, Va., 50
Cullen, John and Mae, Stevens Point, Wis., 60
D'Amico, Rev. James and Grace, Greensburg, Pa., 50
Deardorff, Duane and Marie, Lake Odessa, Mich., 50
Deardorff, Duane and Marie, Lake Odessa, Mich., 50
DeSeelhorst, Earl and Dorothy, Modesto, Calif., 6
Diehl, Robert and Charlotte, Uniontown, Pa., 50
Diehl, Robert and Charlotte, Farmington, Pa., 50
Dixon, Randolph and Ervel, Brightwood, Va., 50
Dodd, Lewis and Marjorie, Bowie Md., 50
Dodson, Milton and Christine, Bassett, Va., 50
Dolph, Ed and Joyce, Plymouth, Ind., 50
Early, Walter and Jean, Harrisonburg, Va., 50
Faust, Emerson and Joan, Greensburg, Pa., 50
Fike, Wade and Grace, Uniontown, Pa., 60
Firestine, Earl and Ruth, Myerstown, Pa., 50
Flora, Edgar and Frances, Bridgewater, Va., 50
France, Cecil and Genoa, Bassett, Va., 55
Ginder, Elam and Ruth, Lancaster, Pa., 60
Graf, Willard and Doris, McMillan, Mich., 50
Gray, Al and Louise, Berea Ohio, 50
Guengerich, Carles and Paulin, Ontario, Calif., 55
Gugelman, Ralph and Wilma, Fort Wayne, Ind., 60
Hall, Amos and Doris, Bassett, Va., 50
Halt, Elmer and Joyce, North

Classified Ads

DIABETICS SERVICE

Diabetics If you have Medicare or insurance, you could be eligible to receive your diabetic supplies at no cost. (Insulin-dependent only.) Call (800) 337-4144.

WANTED

News photographers to cover Annual Conference for Messenger. Reply to Messenger, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or e-mail fffarrar@midwest.net.

INVITATIONS

Cincinnati Church of the Brethren fellowship meets for workshop & support in n.e. area of Cincinnati. We welcome others to join us or bring needs to our attention. Contact us c/o Cincinnati Friends Meeting House, 8075 Keller Rd., Indian Hill, OH 45243. Tel. (513) 956-7733.

Come worship in the Valley of the Sun with Community Church of the Brethren at 111 N. Sunvalley Blvd., Mesa, AZ 86207. Mail to: 8343 E. Emelita Ave., Mesa, AZ 85208. Tel. (602) 357-9811.

Salisbury Community Church of the Brethren, a new and growing fellowship in Salisbury, MD. invites Brethren moving into or vacationing in the Salisbury, Ocean City, MD. area to worship with us. We are willing to provide moving assistance (unloading, child care, area info.) to persons moving into the area. For info. contact: Salisbury CoB, P.O. Box 2001, Salisbury, MD. 21802. Tel. (410) 219-5949 or e-mail NRCain@aol.com

TRAVEL

Annual Conference. Travel with us in air-conditioned coach through the Shenandoah Valley to Annual Conference in Orlando, FL. Included will be visits to Atlanta, Savannah, EPCOT, and Kennedy Space Center. Please write to J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

Oberammergau Passion Play and tour of Europe in 2000. One tour (July 31–Aug. 27) is completely filled. Reservations now being accepted for June 26–July 17 and July 17–31, 2000 tours. Tours will include Paris, the Swiss Alps, Venice, Vienna, Prague, Berlin, Schwarzenau, and many other places. For info., write J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

BUSINESS

Tenure-track faculty position in Department of Business. Preferred teaching areas somewhat flexible depending on qualifications of candidate and possible load shifts within the department. Successful candidate will have teaching strength in a reasonable selection of the following: MIS/AIS, managerial finance, investments, microeconomics, and production management. Also helpful: ability to cover some middle-level accounting courses such as Intermediate and Cost. Skill in developmental advising and building mentoring relationships with students required. Teaching experience or personal educational background in liberal arts setting strongly preferred, as is some practical experience in the nonacademic business world. Institution is a private liberal arts college with a tradition in accounting and CPA preparation, located in forward-looking small town with strong diversified economic base. Ph.D. encouraged; M.Acc. or MBA required. Send curriculum vitae, transcripts, and three reference letters to Dr. Steven Gustafson, Provost, McPherson College, McPherson, Kansas 67460. Application materials submitted by May 1, 1998, will receive full consideration.

Liberty, Ind., 50
armon, Henry and Louise, Roanoke, Va., 55
arsh, Ellis and Helen, Bridgewater, Va., 50
endricks, Merle and Evelyn, Tecumseh, Mich., 50
endricks, Merle and Evelyn, Tecumseh, Mich., 50
uffman, Earson and Lois, Roanoke, Va., 65
auffman, Floyd and Thelma, New Paris, Ind., 50
ancaster, Robert and Alice, Wichita, Kan., 50
ineweaver, Carl and Ruth, Mt. Crawford, Va., 55
ajka, Matthew and Pauline, Uniontown, Pa., 50
artin, Edgar and Fraces, Mercersburg, Pa., 60
iller, Ammon and Violet, Lake Odessa, Mich. 50
eff, Veloris and LaVerne, Nappanee, Ind., 50
issley, Harold and Erma, Palmyra, Pa., 50
verholt, George and Marion, Freeport, Mich., 60
eeves, George and Hazel, Bassett, Va., 50
ichard, Harry and Eva, Port Republic, Va., 50
haffer, Hollis and Rena, Wichita, Kan., 72
hock, Lawrence and Helen, Defiance, Ohio, 60
mith, William and Meredith, Ligonier, Pa., 55
mith, Ardell and Margaret, Myerstown, Pa., 50
navely, Duane and Joyce, Freeport, Mich., 50
navely, Duane and Joyce, Freeport, Mich., 50
tone, Claude and Barbara, Bassett, Va., 50
wisher, Edward and June, Myerstown, Pa., 50
hompson, Clarence and Margaret, Independence, Mo., 55
nderwood, Gilbert and Estelle, Bassett, Va., 50
tz, N. T. and Nellie, Brightwood, Va., 50
alters, Rev. Robert and Marilyn, Phoenix, Ariz., 60
ilkinson, John and Mildred, Dayton, Va., 50

eaths

llison, John T. "Jack," 75, Johnstown, Pa., March 2
ltland, Claudine C. Mummert, 93, Spring Grove, Pa., Feb. 17
nthony, Richard, 80, Quincy, Pa., March 4
rk, Violet, 90, Greenville, Ohio, Feb. 28
aker, Bessie Virginia Dorman, 88, Rockingham County, Va., Feb. 17
aker, Willard W., 58, Edinburg, Va., Dec. 30
atdorf, Robert, 67, Myerstown, Pa., March 2
aughman, Treva, 100, New Oxford, Pa., May 4, 1997
eckner, Sarah Lucy, 68, Brodbecks, Pa., Feb. 8
erry, J. Roger, 58, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 8
lystone, Harold, C., 69, Shelocta, Pa., Feb. 15
ollinger, Lillian, 91, Ephrata, Pa., Feb. 27
reidenstine, Joseph, 77, Lebanon, Pa., March 12
uerkle, Beulah E., 93, Holcomb, Kan., March 2
Burkholder, Karen, 39, McPherson, Kan., March 15
Busch, Lora Lee Fleming, 95, Mount Jackson, Va., Jan. 3
Carson, Delbert C., 90, Canton, Ill., March 9
Cline, Mary Belle Balser Weaver, 64, Fishersville, Va., Dec. 17
Coffey, James William Jr., 72, Weyers Cave, Va., Feb. 9
Combs, Herbert H., 66, Tipp City, Ohio, June 21
Corbin, Mary Jane, 73, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 5
Cupp, Clarence, 90, Dayton, Va., Jan. 18
Dellinger, Bessie Mae, 69, Woodstock, Va., Feb. 25
Delso, Robert F., 57, Johnstown, Pa., Oct. 5
Detweiler, Zola, 94, Bridgewater, Va., Jan. 12
Dickerson, Joe, 90, Fort Wayne, Ind., Jan. 26
Donovan, Vernon E. Sr., 57, Edinburg, Va., Dec. 30
Douglass, Grace, 103, Roanoke, Va., Jan. 31
Driver, F. Wise, 97, Bridgewater, Va., Feb. 26
Emlet, Roy, 92, York, Pa., Aug. 23
Flora, Edith Leonard, 82, Boones Mill, Va., Feb. 25
Follyman, Blanche, 88, Greenville, Ohio, Feb. 24
Freeman, Wendell, 86, Uniontown, Pa., Dec. 24
Fulk, Frederick I., 85, Myerstown, Pa., Dec. 16
Fulk, Peggie Louise, 62, Bridgewater, Va., Dec. 19
Galentine, Leona, 83, Hyattsville, Md., Jan. 5
Ginder, Elam, 79, Lancaster, Pa., March 20
Ginder, Dorothy, 78, Manheim, Pa., Jan. 23
Glendye, Bessie L., 83, Stuarts Draft, Va., Jan. 23
Greiner, John, 84, Elizabethtown, Pa., March 20
Halterman, Lena Virginia Smith, 74, Broadway, Va., March 4
Harman, Rena V., 82, Dayton, Va., Dec. 16
Hawk, Doneth, 82, Akron, Ohio, Oct. 4
Heavner, Sarah R., 94, Moorefield, W. Va., Jan. 16
Hefner, Sarah, Moorefield, W. Va., Jan. 18
Hefner, Helen, Moorefield, W. Va., Nov. 24
Henricks, Stanley T., 79, Peoria, Ill., Feb. 2
Highbarger, J. D., 82, El Dorado, Kan., March 4
Hinegardner, Vada R., 83, Timberville, Va., Dec. 25
Hostetler, Foster, 81, Johnstown, Pa., Feb. 22
Hostetter, Joyce Anna, 63, Winfield, Pa., March 10
Hubbard, Darlene A., 64, Lost City, W. Va., Dec. 15
Huffman, Rayburn, 87, Bridgewater, Va., Feb. 10
Hurst, Ray L., 81, Canton, Ill., March 1
Jarrels, Lera B., 86, Port Republic, Va., Dec. 31
Karper, Paul W., 83, Chambersburg, Pa., Jan. 7
Keagy, Louis J., 90, Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 26
Keenen, Luther, 86, West Liberty, Ohio, Nov. 26
Kessler, Donald E., 75, Tipp City, Ohio, June 21
King, Mabel, 76, Champion, Pa., June 20, 1997
King, Elmer F. Sr., 90, Champion, Pa., Feb. 19
Kline, Robert Miller Sr., 62, Broadway, Va., Nov. 17
Kline, Homer R., 91, Linville, Va., April 18, 1997
Kline, Goldie Marie Summers, 92, Linville, Va., Jan. 18
Krall, Clarence, 78, Myerstown, Pa., Jan. 17
Kramer, Dorothy, 82, Lima, Ohio, Jan. 15
Kreider, Albert V., 89, Goshen, Ind., Dec. 25
Kulmaek, Beulah Houston, 82, Greenwood, Del., Feb. 27
Kuster, Gershon S., 62, Montezuma, Va., Feb. 8
Lambert, Coy, 67, Mount Crawford, Va., Feb. 27
Lamer, D. Bernice, 91, Marshalltown, Iowa, Feb. 6
Lantz, Lois K. Lineweaver, 69, Broadway, Va., Jan. 12
Lantz, Josephine Wooding, 86, Timberville, Va., Jan. 31
Layser, Frances, 66, Myerstown, Pa., March 5
Lehigh, Roy, 86, Lancaster, Pa., Feb. 14
Lineweaver, Violet C., 78, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 16
Long, Dorotha J., 78, Dayton, Va., Jan. 28
Loughry, F. Glade, 87, Lancaster, Pa., March 6
Ludwig, Olive, 76, Rothsville, Pa., Feb. 25
Markey, David L., 79, York, Pa., March 15
Merrifield, Edna, 92, Champaign, Ill., March 13
Miller, Lester A., 94, Palmyra, Pa., Feb. 18
Miller, Virginia Mae, 60, Moorefield, W. Va., Feb. 26
Mills, Barbara K., 51, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 11
Mongold, Odie C., 84, Petersburg, W. Va., Feb. 21
Moore, Dorothy K., 79, Claremont, Calif., March 17
Moreland, Erna, 77, Danville, Ohio, March 13
Moyers, Lola Caldwell, 78, Mathias, W. Va., Jan. 29
Mumaw, Ethel Mae, 75, Quicksburg, Va., Dec. 18
Mumbert, Ruth, 78, Port Republic, Va., Jan. 31
Newcomer, Florence Morris, 95, Uniontown, Pa., Jan. 26
Nickson, Richard, 85, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, Feb. 13
Nolen, Gladys Y., 87, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 22
Norford, Lena B., 100, Stuarts Draft, Va., Feb. 26
Oellig, Cora, 89, New Oxford, Pa., Feb. 1
Puffenbarger, Cleda Jane, 83, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 11
Ridenour, Linda, 61, Smithsburg, Md., Feb. 20
Ross, Pearl, 97, Westerville, Ohio, Jan. 9
Row, Evelyn Lucille Blose, 88, Bridgewater, Va., Feb. 19
Royer, Mary, 88, Arcanum, Ohio, Feb. 25
Runkle, Lovie, 96, New Oxford, Pa., Nov. 30
Seehorn, Merle T., 104, Bridgewater, Va., Feb. 5
Sellers, Mary L., 93, Chambersburg, Pa., Dec. 12
Shaffer, Florence, 79, New Oxford, Pa., June 29
Shank, John H., 82, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 27
Shockey, Richard, 69, Waynesboro, Pa., Jan. 14
Shull, M. Grace, 77, Bridgewater, Va., Dec. 22
Shuman, John, 83, Lebanon, Pa., Feb. 24
Sinclair, Orlo, 80, Smithville, Ohio, Nov. 29
Slater, James L., 88, Canton, Ill., Feb. 19
Smith, Avalon, 67, Dayton, Ohio, Jan. 30
Smith, Sterling, 76, Schaefferstown, Pa., May 31, 1997
Stephens, Carl, 90, Wichita, Kan., May 2, 1997
Sterner, Goldie, 92, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 2
Strickler, Stanley S., 87, Roanoke, Va., Jan. 20
Strickler, Ferne Elizabeth, 92, New Market, Va., Feb. 6
Turner, Mary Ellen, 91, Keyser, W. Va., Feb. 20
Turner, Mary, Moorefield, W. Va., March 1
Van Ness, Fred, 83, Wichita, Kan., Aug. 26
Wagoner, Cleo Margerette, 92, Chicago, Ill., Jan. 10
Walker, Mamie, 89, Brodbecks, Pa., June 24
Walter, Dorothy M., 95, Manchester, N. H., Dec. 27
Walters, Elbie Thomas, 77, Columbiana, Ohio, Jan. 10
Weaver, Mary, 91, Lititz, Pa., March 8
Weaver, Arlene, Largo, Fla., March 7
Weaver, Elmer, L., 83, Goshen, Ind., May 7, 1997
Weddell, L. Stanley, 91, Wooster, Ohio, Nov. 30
Weldy, Mary E., 82, Wakarusa, Ind., Feb. 21
Wetzel, Ester V., 80, Woodstock, Va., Dec. 29
Whetzel, Goldie C., 85, Bergton, Va., Dec. 28
Wilkins, Mollie V. Funkhouser, 98, Mathias, W. Va., Jan. 13
Wilkins, Mervin D., 62, Mathias, W. Va., Feb. 13
Workman, Harry, 83, Danville, Ohio, Jan. 3

Ordinations

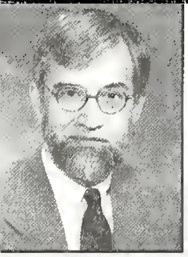
Bitner, Robert L., Aug. 19, Union City, S. Ohio
Heller, Jack B., Nov. 15, Locust Grove, Johnstown, Pa.
Longenecker, David L., Oct. 28, Lititz, Pa.
Rowe, Twyla, Oct. 28, Lititz, Pa..
Samland, Vickie, Aug. 1, Prince of Peace, Littleton, Colo.
Williams, Alfred Lyons, Sept. 16, Harrisburg, Pa.

Pastoral Placements

Harness, Leah O., from Sandy Creek, W. Marva, to Newton, Northern Plains
Hullihen, James, from Ten Mile, W. Pa., to Sugar Run, Mid. Pa.

Licensings

Bennett, Melissa, Feb. 7, Prairie City, Iowa
Benton, Walter T. "Skip", Feb. 7, Maxwell, Iowa
Bream, Jonathan W., Jan. 14, Huntsdale, Pa.
Grove, Lois, Feb. 7, Ivester, Grundy Center, Iowa
Hansen, Philip, Jan. 17, Champaign, Ill.
Hosler, Randy, Oct. 7, Chiques, Manheim, Pa.
Myers, Lois, Oct. 7, Goshen City, Goshen, Ind.
Schildt, Dwane, Jan. 14, Pleasant Hill, Spring Grove, Pa.
Schrock, Randy Lee, Jan. 17, Green Hill, Westover, Md.
Weyant, John S., Jan. 14, Shrewsbury, Pa.



Editorial

The meaning of meetings

At the Association of Brethren Caregivers board meeting in March, I had been going on and on about some item of business when our chair, Bob Cain, suggested that the item might need to be tabled since there was no consensus. My fellow board member Phil Flory, winking, said that was a good idea, because I wouldn't be at the next meeting and they could go ahead and pass it without interference.

It was true. I was finished. With my second three-year term on the ABC board coming to an end, this was to be my last meeting. During the past six years I have sat through many meetings, not only meetings of the full board, but also of the finance committee, the executive committee, the membership committee, the Homes and Older Adult Council. I confess I spent a lot of my time in those meetings wondering why I was there. Is this really necessary? Did Jesus go to meetings?

I was involved in endless budget discussions, contributed to numerous five-year plans, and worked on mission statements till I was blue. "Wait a minute," I protested to Jay Gibble, then our executive director, once when he started us writing another statement. "We just did that last meeting."

"That was a mission statement," he assured me. "This is a vision statement."

That wasn't the only thing I learned. I learned the meaning of AAHA and ABMOAM and AARM and COCM (but don't ask me now). I finally learned to find the paperwork for agenda item 17.1.a.1 before the discussion on it was over. I learned the fine lines of distinction between board roles and staff roles. Whenever I would make a pitch for the board to get more involved in the exciting work of ABC, like the Bethany Brethren Community Center, ministries in Puerto Rico, or the Lafiya program, it was explained to me that these are staff responsibilities. My interpretation: The staff gets to do the fun stuff.

I loved serving on the ABC board and will remember fondly my time of service there. But not because we approved a new logo during my tenure, or adopted a wonderful marketing plan, which we did. There was no particular budget we approved that I will cherish forever. I do remember our party on the riverboat at the Cincinnati Annual Conference, and going out for ice cream with friends after a night meeting. We met following National Older Adult Conference at Lake Junaluska, and I remember the deep sharing my prayer partner and I did as we walked around the lake during our devotional time. I remember my conversations with Bill Cable and Clyde Weaver and Joel Thompson, and feel privileged ABC gave me the opportunity to meet them before they died. I remember kindnesses shown to me by older and wiser church members after my occasional brash remarks. I remember the charisma of Jay Gibble and the admiration I felt watching him lead. I remember, when we worked on the end-of-life paper, being inspired by the faith of my chaplain colleagues who witness death daily. If they are so confident that death is a passing from one life to another, then I can be too.

After six years on the ABC board, and many years on many other church boards, I'm just beginning to get it. Church business is not about business, it's about relationships. The best parts are not the budgets but the breaks, not the meetings but the meals. God spread our churches far apart so we'd have plenty of time to talk in the car on the way to meetings. And God gave us business so we'd have something to talk about until we get down to the important things.

It would be going too far to say that business is merely God's pretext for human interaction, but it is surely no more than the context and the means by which we live our faith. What gets done is not as important as how it gets done, and even the process is not as important as the people, those involved in decisions and those affected. That said, business can be a fine way to do God's work and share faith and strengthen relationships.

It is a joy to watch those who understand this conduct business. I have watched church leaders recently call meetings to build trust, and shake their heads perplexed when trust is broken. I have watched rules bent to help a fragile soul, and rules strictly enforced to stop a disaster in the making. I've seen a board turn down a request gently, and I've seen a proposal rejected in no uncertain terms, out of love for those who might not hear the answer otherwise. I've witnessed faith and courage expressed in budget proposals and even in five-year plans. I have yet to see a mission statement lead to salvation, but maybe someday I will.

The kingdom may be brought nearer by business meetings, but only if we don't take ourselves too seriously. God can get along without our boards. If we must meet, we can at least try to stick to God's agenda and not get sidetracked with our own plans. We can take breaks and have some fun and meet people we didn't know before. There is a saying familiar in our Brethren churches, "When the service is over the service begins." To that we might add a corollary: "When the meeting is over the *meeting* begins."—FLETCHER FARRAR

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- American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA)

Brethren Village
Celebrating a Century of Commitment

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P.O. Box 5093
Lancaster, PA 17606

Lebanon Valley Brethren Home

1200 Grubb Street
Palmyra, PA 17078
(717) 838-5406

Peter Becker Community

800 Maple Avenue
Harleysville, PA 19438
(215) 256-9501

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

212th Annual Conference

Orlando, Florida June 30 - July 5, 1998

. . . so that God is not ashamed to be called our God

Orange County Convention Center

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Tuesday
William H. Willimon

Wednesday
Elaine Sollenberger
Acting Moderator

Thursday
Fred Swartz

Friday
William Sloane Coffin

Saturday
Donna Forbes Steiner

Sunday
Robert Alley

SATURDAY EVENING DRAMA

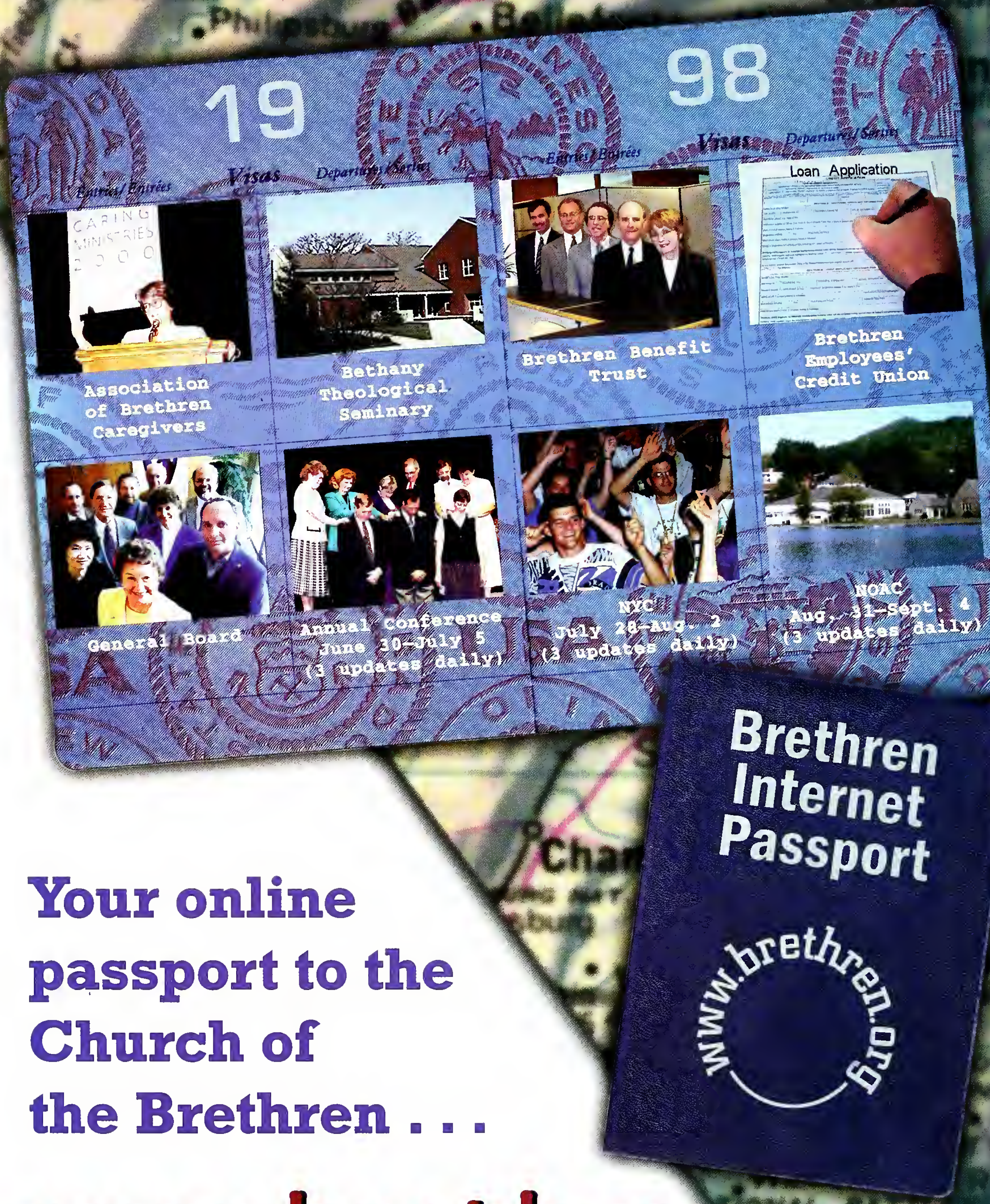
Presented by
Bethany Theological Seminary

Church of the Brethren June 1998

Messenger

The new Bethany

The seminary is on solid ground again


19
98
Entries/ Entrées
Visas
Departures/ Sorties
CARING MINISTRIES 2000
Loan Application
Association of Brethren Caregivers
Bethany Theological Seminary
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Messenger

Vol. 147, No. 5 June 1998

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On the cover: The new Bethany Theological Seminary building in Richmond, Ind., shares a peaceful and beautiful campus with Earlham School of Religion. Flowering trees signal the season for another graduation, one of many more to come.

Wendy McFadden

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Bethany Theological Seminary was on the verge of financial collapse when it moved from Oak Brook, Ill., to Richmond, Ind., in 1994. Now it has finally sold the former campus and is debt-free, facing the future with new confidence.

14 Advice from church fire victims

In the first three months of this year, three Brethren churches were devastated by fire. Now on the road to recovery, the churches are eager to tell other churches what they did right and wrong, and what your church should do. First, check your insurance!

17 Peace first in southern Sudan

David Radcliff, director of Brethren Witness, led a January delegation to war-ravaged southern Sudan. Here he brings back a message from Sudanese Christians that education and training are just as important as food aid.

22 Ethics of fetal tissue use

The chair of the Annual Conference study committee that last year brought a paper recommending approval of medical use of fetal tissue explains the ethical pros and cons. The paper was voted down last year, but the issue won't go away.

24 Whatever happened to Sunday school?

Many Brethren can remember when the problem under discussion was how to get the hordes who came for Sunday school to stay for church. Now Sunday schools are mere shadows of their former selves. What happened? And what can be done?

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From the Publisher

Last year when cleaning out files I ran across a 10-year-old memo from a colleague. In it he was encouraging the General Board's Administrative Council to consider the advantages of adding personal computers to the office.

At that time, the idea of providing a computer for every employee seemed unthinkable. Nowadays if a network problem or power failure renders our computers unusable, we figure we might as well go home. Almost everything we do in the office requires a computer.

Just a few years ago, the Brethren Press designer was considered a bit demanding when he upgraded to an amazing one gigabyte of storage memory. This issue of Messenger was designed on a computer with six gigabytes of storage memory.

Not long ago, all news releases from the General Board were mailed first-class. We were limited by budget and time, carefully parceling out both so that releases went only to those media most likely to use the news. Now the news goes out every week, not only to the news media but to hundreds and hundreds of Brethren individuals and organizations. Anyone with e-mail or fax capabilities can keep up to date.

Some might complain about the negative side of technology—the ubiquitous answering machine rather than a human being on the other end of the line, time wasted surfing the Net, databases that treat people like data. . . . But the same complaints that are made about computers today were made about the telephone a century ago. Like the telephone, computers are changing the ways people get together.

Within the first few months after my family bought a personal computer, we communicated more often with my sister and her family in Papua New Guinea than we had the entire dozen or so years that they had lived there. Somehow the speed and ease with which we could send letters electronically prompted us to do it much more often.

The technology is not just a province of the young. Consider Irene Bittinger, who travels the world every day via the Internet (see page 3). My parents, who have more time than I do to check the inbox, hear from me several times a week— more often than we talk by phone.

Within two days of the burning of the Manchester Church of the Brethren, a story and photos were posted on the Church of the Brethren Web site. Brethren across the country wrote in to tell of the poignancy of that connection.

This summer those visiting the Web site will be able to experience three major conferences—Annual Conference, National Youth Conference, and the National Older Adult Conference—through updates three times a day. Be sure to check it out at www.brethren.org. Parents will be able to see what their youth are doing in Colorado. And a few weeks later these middle adults can see what *their* parents are doing at Lake Junaluska.

I don't think we need to fear losing the personal touch. We'll always get together in person. (After all, how many times have we voted not to make Annual Conference less frequent?) And we'll always communicate on paper. But a community is a community, whether it's virtual or in the same room.

And maybe a virtual community isn't that unusual an idea. I remember reading about one in the book of Hebrews. That "cloud of witnesses" stretches back through the centuries; today we have one that reaches across the Internet.

Wendy McFadden

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'Mom B,' 93, has her own Web site

ene Bittinger, *assisted by er son. Richard, goes out nd about with her scooter. he travels even farther via he Internet.*

While most people Irene Bittinger's age, and many decades younger, refuse to have anything to do with complicated, high-tech computers, she revels in using hers. The 93-year-old matriarch has a Comtrade, a Pentium multimedia model, with a top-of-the-line color printer. It sits on a computer desk near her bed in the Woods Health Center at the Brethren Hillcrest Homes retirement complex in La Verne, Calif.

"The nurses urge Mother to get more rest because she was staying up nights trying to master Windows 95," said her son, Richard. "Although Mother lives in the hospital section because she needs full-time assistance, she has her scooter and is out and about fairly regularly. Her Parkinson's tremor makes writing difficult, but via e-mail she sends letter-perfect copy to her family," he added.

The Bittinger family includes four children, ten grandchildren, fourteen great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild. Her son, Stanley, instigated purchase of his mother's computer. And Joe Vecchio, administrative assistant in the Southwest Pacific District office, helped set up and now maintains Bittinger's computer. "Irene learned computers very quickly. She was sending e-mail the first day," he said.

Recently she made 30 greeting cards to send to people around Hillcrest. The last time Richard telephoned his mother because he hadn't heard from her, she explained she had spent the week writing more stories for her Web page, "How Wide Is My Valley." The page, set up by grandson Steve, features Irene and her late husband, Desmond's lifetime experiences. Stanley is working to add pictures to her text.

Bittinger, who is "Mom B" to students who attended McPherson College during her husband's tenure as president, is honorary chair for the college's fundraising campaign.

"She may use a scooter, but she greeted all of us by name," marveled college alumna, Phyllis Beam, after that dinner. And when the college's grand dame spoke into the microphone, alums in attendance from that period, 1950-1965, remarked, "Forty-plus years simply vanished at the sound of her voice."

Irene Bittinger's e-mail address is grandma-irene@juno.com. Her Web page is: http://home.earthlink.net/~momb/

—Irene S. Reynolds

Churches challenged with $500 grants

Every congregation in Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvania districts has received a $500 grant to be used to offer immediate aid to those in need. The grants were made from The United Relief Fund (TURF), a fund established in the early 1990s by the two districts as a way for some of the money raised from their large annual disaster relief auction to be used by congregations for local needs.

Fifteen to 20 percent of the auction proceeds are sent to TURF for distribution. About $270,000 has been used for various projects since the fund was established, said Joe Long, TURF chair. Those projects include providing clothing and blankets for the homeless, providing transportation to disaster relief projects, and an AIDS ministry.

Thompsons assist in Bangladesh

Assessing the training resources and emergency response preparedness of various disaster response programs within Bangladesh was the task undertaken Feb. 16-26 by Jan and Roma Jo Thompson, members of Community Church of the Brethren, Mesa, Ariz. Jan Thompson is a former director of the General Board's refugee/disaster program.

The Thompsons and several other consultants carried out the assignment for Church World Service. CWS's involvement in Bangladesh is in cooperation with Actions by Churches Together (ACT), an organization formed several years ago by the World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Relief, and others to try to get all response agencies working cooperatively.

Roma Jo and Jan Thompson.

Members of the Spring Creek *and Haitian churches work on the sound system prior to a joint worship service.*

Brethren getting together

The Haitian Church of the Brethren, Brooklyn, N.Y., paid a visit to the Spring Creek Church of the Brethren, Hershey, Pa., on World Communion Sunday last October. After a three-hour bus ride from Brooklyn, members of the Haitian church joined in the worship service and love feast. The Haitian church's band and choir performed, and the visitors joined in the feetwashing, the meal, and the bread and cup communion. Several small groups of Spring Creek members have traveled to Brooklyn to worship with the Haitian church. Along with other Atlantic Northeast District churches, Spring Creek is helping the Haitians with funding to purchase a larger building to accommodate their rapidly growing congregation.

Economic stations of the cross

Sue Wagner Fields of Little Swatara Church of the Brethren, Bethel, Pa., participated in an unusual Good Friday service in Washington, D. C. She was a reader at one of the "Economic Stations of the Cross," an interfaith effort to focus attention on international lending institutions and the role these organizations play in relation to human welfare and the health of the environment.

In a 14-station pilgrimage reminiscent of Jesus' journey to Golgotha, the procession moved from one institution to another, including the White House, each time offering statements of concern and hope interspersed with scriptural quotations. If policies made in Washington can be changed, "we can change the world," said Wagner Fields.

Amazing handbells

une 20-22 Kendra and anelle Flory, daughters of noderator-elect Lowell Flory, will perform a jazzy nterpretation of "Amazing Grace," arranged by Kevin McChesney, at the Area Eight Regional Conference of the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers. McChesney will critique heir performance there before the Florys travel to Annual Conference where hey will perform the same arrangement.

Kendra will also ring a handbell solo, "The Rejoicing," at Annual Conference. Kendra, who directs the second through ixth grade handbell choir or Trinity Lutheran Church in McPherson, is a ophomore at McPherson College. Her sister, anelle, is a senior at McPherson High School.

—Irene S. Reynolds

Nappanee celebrates centennial in July

The Nappanee (Ind.) Church of the Brethren will celebrate its centennial uly 18 and 19. There will be a hog roast on Saturday evening, and on Sunday morning Bill Kidwell, pastor from 1963 to 1971, will preach at the worship ervice. Ruth Angle of the Turkey Creek Church of the Brethren (4 miles east of Nappanee) will discuss the history of the congregaion.

Members of the Turkey Creek congregation organized the first Brethren services in Nappanee as early as 1877, but Nappanee was organized as a separate congregation in July 1898.

Virlina adults join in Faith Quest weekend

Adults in Virlina District have seen evidence of increased commitment and devotion to the church in youth who have participated in "Faith Quest" weekend events. Wanting a life-changing experience of their own, 46 adults attended "Pilgrimage: A Faith Quest for Adults." Participants at the March event had the opportunity "to share and learn with others as we journeyed together on the road to a deeper spirituality and commitment," said Doris Quarles, associate executive. Two similar events have been scheduled for 1999—one for youth (March 12-14) and one for adults (March 26-28).

Expressions of solidarity

Manchester Church of the Brethren raised a special offering on Sunday, April 26, in memory of Cesar Humberto Lopez, following his brutal assassination in El Salvador the week before.

Lopez, head of the youth and children's ministry for Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel, was gunned down walking to the church offices in San Salvador.

The Manchester Church and Iglesia Emmanuel are sister parishes. Manchester youth group members Ben Weller and Ambrosia Brown, who stayed in the home of Cesar Lopez last summer when the Manchester church sent a special youth mission to its sister church, led the congregation in prayer.

Congregation members David Rogers and Worth Weller flew the following week to San Salvador to carry messages of consolation and solidarity and to represent the congregation at Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel's May 3 memorial service for its slain youth leader.

MIR VLADA SVIJETOM

Debbie Roberts, *the Brethren campus minister at University of La Verne; Stephen Morgan, university president; and Beverly Rupel, member of the board of trustees.*

Peace Pole planted at La Verne

On March 26 a peace pole was "planted" at the University of La Verne, La Verne, Calif. The pole carries the message "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in eight languages. Campus organizations sponsored exhibits in the university quad pointing to areas of injustice in the world.

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," Messenger, *1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.*

News

The 36-year conflict *has seen indigenous communities hardest hit, targeted for atrocities and displacement. Their rights continue to be an issue in Guatemala.*

David Radcliff

Guatemala bishop murdered after war memories released

The people of Guatemala let their voices be heard April 24 after more than three decades of fear-induced silence. On that day, the Project for the Recovery of the Historic Memory (or REMHI, as it is known in Spanish) was released in the cathedral in Guatemala City.

The report gathers the testimonies of some 6,500 Guatemalans, each of whom had seen their lives and the lives of their loved ones torn apart in a brutal civil war that left over 150,000 civilians dead, another 40,000 "disappeared," 200,000 orphans, and 1 million refugees. The Roman Catholic organizers of the project hoped that in the retelling of their stories, the people would take a significant step toward personal and community healing and national reconciliation.

Two days later, a brutal effort was made to once again impose a reign of silence. Juan Gerardi, auxiliary bishop of Guatemala and general coordinator for the human rights office of the archdiocese—the office responsible for REMHI—was murdered in the doorway of his home by an assailant wielding a cement block. Even in a nation gripped by common crime, robbery has been ruled out as a motive. That left but one likely culprit: those angered by the REMHI report. This would include a collusion of government, economic, and military powers that have conspired to terrorize and control the country for decades.

Attending the April 24 presentation was Brethren Witness director David Radcliff. "If it proves true that this murder was sanctioned by Guatemalan officials," Radcliff commented the day after the assault, "it is an affront to the Christian community in Guatemala and to the people of Guatemala as a whole. This moment in history offers a long-awaited occasion for healing and reconciliation, as well as for justice and peace. Unfortunately, some sectors of the nation may do anything to keep this from coming true.

"Let us pray for the people of Guatemala that they may have the courage to continue on the path they have begun to walk. And we must also call on our government to pressure the government of Guatemala to thoroughly investigate and vigorously prosecute this crime. The long-suffering people of Guatemala deserve no less."

PrimeTime: 'Brethren' sect not Church of the Brethren

Not all "Brethren" are the same, or even close. That point was made quite evident in a March episode of ABC's "PrimeTime Live."

The broadcast featured a cult called "The Brethren." Although there are differences among the handful of communions worldwide that trace their roots back to eight men and women who founded the Brethren movement in Schwarzenau, Germany, in 1708, they are minor when those denominations are compared to The Brethren cult.

According to "PrimeTime Live," the cult was formed in the mid-1970s by Jim Roberts, son of an evangelical minister. Its members often travel to colleges and universities in attempts to recruit new members. Cult leaders persuade members to dissociate themselves from their families out of the fear that family members may try to kidnap or "deprogram" them. Members of the cult follow a near-transient lifestyle, routinely living in low-income housing and garbageicking their food.

Viewers familiar with the Church f the Brethren called "PrimeTime ive" during the program, prompting ost Diane Sawyer to clarify on the ir that the Church of the Brethren is legitimate, well-established denomination.

"We want to make sure that you now that Jim Roberts' group, those rethren, have nothing to do with hat group, the Church of the rethren," Sawyer said.

taff changes at OEPA, BBT, Vashington office, Bethany

awrence Hoover of Harrisonburg, 'a., has been retained by the rethren Benefit Trust's Brethren oundation to assist with estate planning for the foundation's clients. Ioover, who has worked for the US tate Department, is senior partner t Hoover, Penrod, Davenport and 'rist in Harrisonburg. He is a nember of Harrisonburg First 'hurch of the Brethren.

He and James Replogle will work ut of a newly opened Brethren oundation satellite office in Harrisonburg, Va., and can be reached at 88-311-6530. They are sharing pace with Ray Glick and Faye Miller, of the General Board's Funding staff, who can be reached at 40-434-7874.

Loyce Borgmann of Vienna, Va., as been named coordinator of the 'hurch of the Brethren Washington)ffice. She is a volunteer, working n-site three days a week. Borgmann oins Brethren Volunteer Service vorkers Heather Nolen and Costa Nicolaidis, who will continue their erms as legislative assistants.

Kaysa McAdams retired May 10 as usiness manager for Bethany Theological Seminary, following seven ears on the Bethany staff.

McAdams joined the Bethany staff in May 1991. Following the move by Bethany to Richmond, Ind., in 1994, she became director of a business office that serves Bethany and Earlham School of Religion (ESR). She also has handled the financial aid programs for both seminaries.

Audrey Osborne of Codorus, Pa., has been named program coordinator for On Earth Peace Assembly, an independent Church of the Brethren peace and reconciliation ministries organization.

Osborne, a graduate of Western Maryland College, has served as Christian education/visitation staff for Westminster (Md.) Church of the Brethren and as chaplain and assistant program coordinator for Camp Eder, Fairfield, Pa.

Churches making increasing use of computer technology

A recent survey of computer technology in the local church shows a very high level of computer usage, with more than half of those users reporting Internet access now or in the near future.

The survey was conducted by the Protestant Church-owned Publishers Association (PCPA), of which Brethren Press is a member. Congregations surveyed were from 11 denominations, including the Church of the Brethren.

Among congregations of 200 or more members, 98 percent have at least one computer in their church office. Forty-two percent have Internet access, and 19 percent expect to have Internet access in the near future.

Seventeen percent of the congregations have their own home page on the World Wide Web, and 13 percent expect to create one in the near future.

Survey respondents said they used the Internet for e-mail (41 percent), research (22 percent), ordering supplies and resources (12 percent), and receiving denominational information (12 percent).

Brethren survey participants listed the following benefits of having a Web site and Internet connection—ability to connect directly with vendors, access to other members, receiving information from the denomination, personal responses for the pastor, e-mail with college students, and sermon information.

Access to the Internet by PCPA's member publishing houses increased from 81 percent to 100 percent from 1996 to 1997. In that year, Web site presence increased from 47 to 81 percent.

CPT receives second death threat linked to Middle East

An April 5 death threat recorded on the answering machine of Christian Peacemaker Teams was similar in content and timing to one received in January, says CPT. While the more recent threat targeted the Chicago office, the January message threatened members of CPT working in the West Bank city of Hebron.

CPT has maintained a violence-deterring presence in Hebron since June 1995, and works closely with both Palestinians and Israeli peace groups. The team has periodically received verbal and written death threats from Israeli settlers, but detailed phone threats to the Chicago office suggest a new level of intensity, according to CPT.

CPT says this latest threat comes at a time when Israel is under major pressure from Palestinians and the international community to implement the Oslo Peace accords, which call for Israel to turn over additional land to the Palestinians.

Christian Peacemaker Teams is an

initiative among Church of the Brethren and Mennonite congregations and Friends meetings that support violence reduction efforts around the world.

Giving to General Board down slightly as of May

Gifts to the General Board's General Fund for the first quarter of 1998 were up from 1997's first quarter, but were trailing 1997 by $32,000 in early May.

"I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the congregations and individuals who continue their strong support of the vital ministries of the Church of the Brethren General Board," said Ken Neher, director of funding. "We appreciate the confidence and trust you place in us to be good stewards of your mission and outreach funds."

White House vigil protests School of the Americas

A vigil was held April 26-28 at the White House and at the US Capitol to call for closing the School of the Americas (SOA).

The Church of the Brethren General Board called for the school's closing in a July 1997 resolution.

Although graduates of the school have been linked to the most egregious human rights violations in this hemisphere, the US-operated school, located at Fort Benning, Columbus, Ga., in January received additional funding after approval from a Defense Department subcommittee. According to the committee's certification report, the SOA now meets certain conditions that allowed it to receive the funding, which stands at $20 million annually. Congress debated funding of the school last fall.

According to the National Council of Churches, many problems still remain with the school: there is still no adequate external oversight of curriculum; flaws in past curriculum are not fully admitted and, thus, are unlikely to be corrected; human rights and democratic values remain a minimal part of the curriculum; there is no objective evaluation of SOA graduates.

Heather Nolen of the Church of the Brethren Washington Office cites other troubling indicators as well, and says that almost 150 SOA graduates have been linked to human rights abuses since Congress debated the school last year.

Brethren send emergency aid to victims of Alabama storms

In the wake of devastating storms in Birmingham, Ala., $5,000 has been allocated from the Church of the Brethren General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund. The allocated funds will provide two child care volunteers for up to two weeks and will allow an Emergency Response/ Service Ministries representative to assess whether a rebuilding project needs to be established.

Other recent ER/SM efforts include:

- the presence of Teresa Matamora, a Spanish-speaking disaster worker, in Orlando, Fla., to help disaster victims contact agencies for help.
- allocating $2,600 to Catholic Charities of Le Center, Minn., to help displaced children with transportation to school.
- sending 720 school kits to McCalla, Ala., for children whose school was destroyed by a tornado.

Church leaders: Halt military, start peace in Chiapas

Over 300 religious leaders from throughout the United States have signed a statement calling for the United States and Mexico to end the escalating violence against indigenous communities in Chiapas, Mexico.

The statement was signed on behalf of the Church of the Brethren by David Radcliff, director of Brethren Witness. It was also signed by the top leadership of the National Council of Churches. It calls on the two governments to address the "pattern of tolerance" for paramilitary groups like the one responsible for the massacre of 45 Tzotzil Indians in Acteal on Dec. 22.

Since that massacre, the military has reportedly stationed an additional 5,000 troops in indigenous communities in the Chiapas highlands, increasing the current number of soldiers there to 40,000. According to the NCC, between 300 and 600 people have been killed there as a direct result of the military and paramilitary since a 1994 ceasefire. An estimated 10,000 people from the area have been displaced.

"We, the undersigned religious leaders, call on the governments of Mexico and the United States to examine official policies that have resulted in stalled peace talks and repeated explosions of violence in Chiapas," reads the letters sent to presidents Zedillo and Clinton. "Resolute action is urgently needed to demilitarize the conflict and achieve a negotiated resolution. Any attempt at a military solution in Chiapas will only lead to more bloodshed and unrest, a loss of credibility for the Mexican government, and strained US-Mexico relations."

Brethren lobby on welfare reform, church-state relations

Brethren traveled to Capitol Hill twice in late April to speak with legislators.

Stephen Longenecker, professor of history and religious history at Bridgewater (Va.) College, visited five legislative offices to discuss an article he wrote opposing the Istook Amendment, an amendment that, according to some, would weaken the balance

Resources and Opportunities

Good Ground: Letting the Word Take Root is the name of a new adult curriculum co-published by Brethren Press and Faith & Life Press. The two publishers are the creators of he *Generation Why* youth curriculum.

According to Julie Garber, Brethren Press editor, *Good Ground* is a unique approach to Bible study. "It lets the Bible ask most of the questions and lets participants struggle with the answers," Garber said. "When we ask, How can I be saved?' the Bible asks, 'Whom will you serve?' When we ask, 'What will happen to me when I die?' the Bible asks, 'What does the Lord require of you?' When we ask, 'Whom does God loves best?' the Bible asks, 'Who is your neighbor?' *Good Ground* goes to the Scriptures for questions, not just answers."

Known for producing children and youth materials geared toward "active learners," the publishers of *Good Ground* saw a need for an interactive Sunday school curriculum for adults, said Wendy McFadden, Brethren Press publisher. "*Good Ground* is created for a broad audience age-wise, but targets those who enjoy using a range of earning styles."

Participants make connections between the Word and the world through a variety of activities. Beginning with he premise that everyone has equal access to the Bible's ruth, all participants, including the leader, use identical esources. "These are sessions in which learning happens, ather than sessions in which teaching happens," said Ken Hawkley, an education staff member for the General Conference Mennonite Church, for which Faith & Life Press is the publisher.

The *Good Ground* name is inspired by the parable of the sower, in which some seed falls on good ground and brings forth grain.

The two fall units of *Good Ground* will be available in June. Two winter units will be off the press in July, so that users will be able to start the Sunday school year with four titles to choose from. Over the four-year cycle, nearly all books of the Bible will be covered. Each study is six sessions long, with two studies offered each quarter. To order, contact Brethren Press at 800-441-3712.

Church of the Brethren youth groups are receiving a packet of resource materials from the General Board's Brethren Witness office. Included in the packet is a flier that describes a "Turn Down the Heat" initiative, an activity youth can help lead in their churches to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide that is emitted daily by automobiles.

Also included are a "Take the Pledge" flier, which describes the campaign that asks youth and adults not to fight to kill, and hunger education and action materials. For more information, contact Brethren Witness at witness_gb@brethren.org or at 800-323-8039.

A 40-hour course in mediation and conflict resolution is offered July 27-Aug. 1 by Education for Conflict Resolution, Inc., at the Manchester College Union, North Manchester, Ind., "Mediating Interpersonal Conflict" covers the basics of conflict theory and communication skills for conflict resolution, win-win negotiation, and community mediation, along with guided practice in the mediation process. The training fee is $350. To register, contact ECR, Inc. P.O. Box 275, North Manchester, IN 46962, call 219-982-4621 or e-mail: ecri@actinet.com.

News (continued)

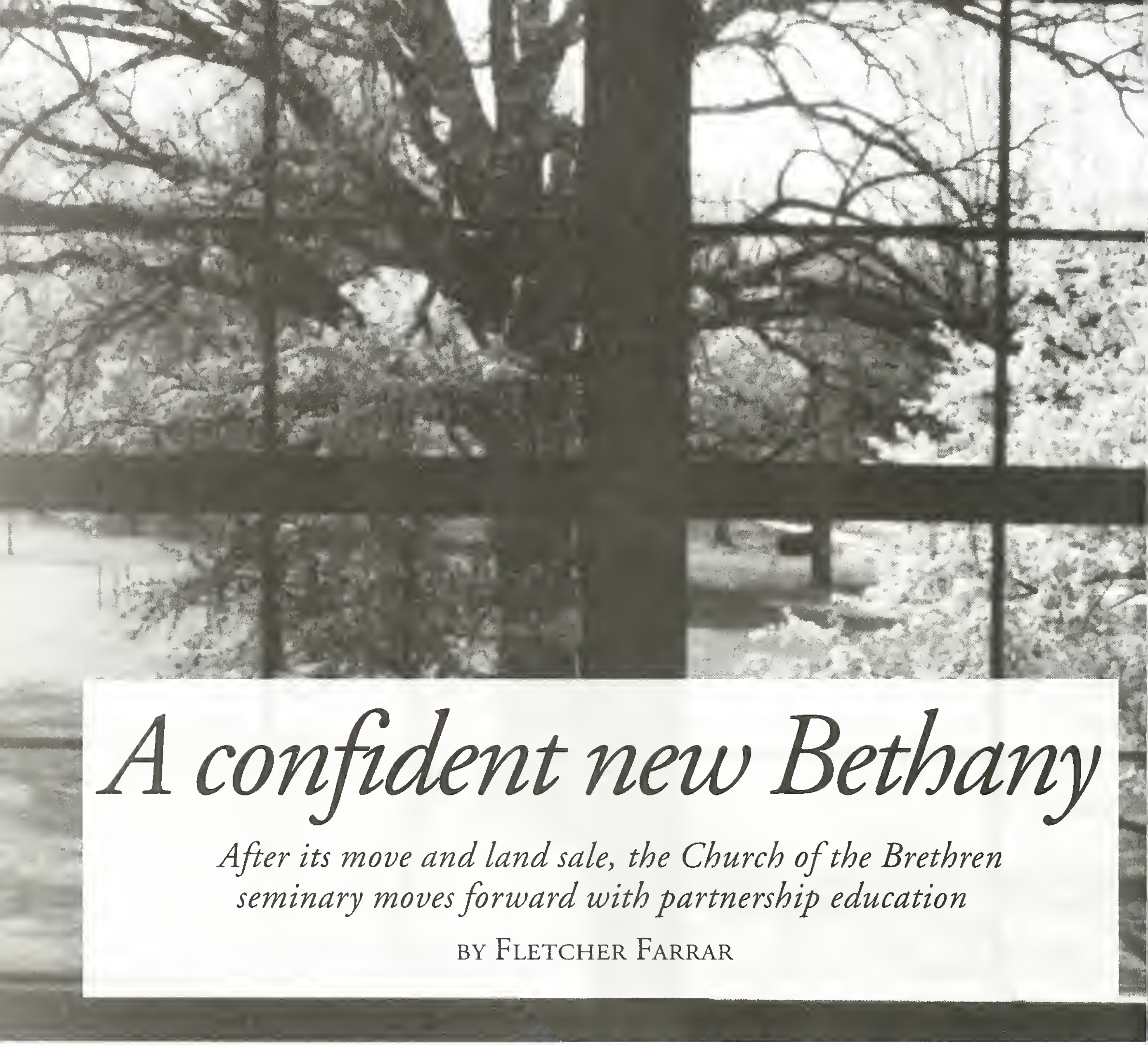
between church and state, encouraging government-endorsed prayer and religion in schools.

"Annual Conference clearly opposes any change in the current interpretaion of separation of church and state (codified in the US Constitution)," Longenecker said.

The Washington Office organized visits for three Eastern Mennonite University students, including Shelly Ungemach, a Church of the Brethren member from Palmyra, Pa. The visits to three legislative offices were intended to encourage support of the Agriculture Bill (S.1150/H.R.2534) and co-sponsorship of legislation to increase the minimum wage.

Enactment of the Agriculture Bill would use surplus money (ironically saved by the federal food stamp program) to restore food stamps to approximately 200,000 of the 900,000 legal immigrants who lost them under the new Welfare Law, said Heather Nolen of the Washington Office. The three students expressed concern over the double-edged state of welfare reform, which moves individuals from welfare into work, but often without providing them with living wages.

Washington Office staff are available to help any Brethren interested in meeting with their members of Congress. For more information, contact the Washington Office at washofc@aol.com or at 202-546-3202.



A confident new Bethany

After its move and land sale, the Church of the Brethren seminary moves forward with partnership education

BY FLETCHER FARRAR

Three weeks before graduation at Bethany Theological Seminary, the dozen students in Prof. Dan Ulrich's advanced seminar on the Gospel of John are defending their final papers from critiques by their peers. It is a diverse group that includes four women, two white-haired older men, and one African man. All look to be over 30 and are bright and serious. The situation seems ripe for cutthroat academic competition. So I'm struck by how kind they are to one another.

The discussion is seminary-ish, to be sure, with questions like, "In what ways does the evangelist recast the sign source?" And, "How would you apply the Deuteronomy 13 corrective?" But a visitor picks up signals that this study goes beyond intellectual exercise. "What is the relevance for our own faith?" the professor interjects. Addressing the student who wrote about Jesus's miracles, the classmate responding to his paper concluded, "I believe you believe in miracles yourself." The writer acknowledged with a smile, "Yes, I do."

Insiders describe Bethany as a "believers" seminary, where faculty and administrators make no secret of their Christian faith nor apologies for it. But it is also a seminary where students are encouraged to be "in dialogue with the text" to find their own answers to their faith questions, rather than having answers dictated to them. Here it's okay if students believe in miracles and okay if they don't. Bethany is sometimes accused of providing more questions than answers. But it points to where answers can be found.

The approach seems to work. Students from many points on the faith spectrum are finding an intellectual home here. This year there were 98 students altogether, some of whom were part-time. The number of "full-time equivalent" students this year was 44, about the same as last year, though down from the 61 "full-time equivalents" enrolled during 1993-'94, the seminary's last year in Oak Brook, Ill. Though there are fewer students these days, there are more Church of the Brethren students, with Brethren making up 95 percent of the student body now, but only 70 percent the year before the move.

Bethany is now settled after its 1994 move to Richmond, Ind., where it shares a campus with Quaker schools, Earlham College and Earlham School of Religion. The new Bethany seems clear about its mission. It wants to be the seminary for the Church of the Brethren, as opposed to a regional ecumenical institution or a seminary marketing a particular academic specialty. And it wants to prepare students to be pastors, leaving to others specialties like sacred music or pure academic pursuits. Now debt-free, the seminary is facing the future with renewed confidence. There are challenges ahead, but the Church of the Brethren's seminary seems to have weathered its latest storm.

The biggest cause for celebration is the $8 million sale, completed April 13, of its 51-acre former campus in Oak Brook. The sale allows Bethany to pay off its 1993 loan of $4 million from Brethren Benefit Trust, plus interest on that loan. The sale proceeds also pay back the money Bethany has borrowed from its own endowment fund over the years to stay afloat, and it allows payment of back property taxes Bethany owed on the Oak Brook campus because the property had lost its nonprofit exemption.

Of course the sale is a tremendous relief for all concerned. Earle W. Fike Jr., chair of the board of trustees, says it provides "the first real breathing room" since he came on the board 10 years ago. "This is probably the first time in 15 years that we've been fiscally sound."

But Fike is quick to add: "We need to keep telling the church that we're not on Easy Street."

Getting across the dual message that yes, the debt is paid, but no, the seminary can't get by with less support from donors, is one of the biggest challenges facing Bethany officials now. "If we lose significant annual support because the church perceives us as rich, we are headed for trouble," said President Eugene F. Roop to the board in February.

Now debt-free, the seminary is facing the future with renewed confidence.

The reason the debt payment won't have much impact on the operating budget right away, Roop explained, is that Bethany hasn't been paying much on its debt for the past five years. The only interest paid before the land sale was 4.5 percent on the money Bethany borrowed from its own endowment. So, while the absence of payments during the loan period helped Bethany survive a tough time, it means there's little relief now.

Keeping a tight lid on spending also has kept Bethany sound during the transition. Fike gives Roop credit for operating the seminary in the black for the past four years, adding that the president "didn't make any friends by his close watch over things." The close watch continues. "We will be in our present budgetary situation for the next five years," Roop told the board. "Adequate, but tight."

Bethany will continue to rely on annual giving from Church of the Brethren congregations and individuals for more than half of its annual budget. Those gifts have amounted to over $800,000 annually in recent years, and Roop hopes for no letup in generosity. "We anticipate that revenue stream to remain steady in terms of dollars," Roop told the trustees, "and would hope that it will grow to keep up with changes in the cost of living."

Earnings from the restored endowment should help the income stream, but only gradually. The seminary uses a three-year average of endowment income to determine its operating budget, so this year's boost to the principle won't be fully reflected in operating income until the budget year 2000.

The endowment is expected to play a larger role in the future, however. Bethany is a half partner in Fountain Square of Lombard, Inc., which borrowed money to buy the Oak Brook property. As Fountain Square gradually sells off parcels of the land to a planned hotel, condominiums, and retail stores, some of the proceeds will flow into the endowment fund. Bethany expects another $8 million. Thus, Roop says cautiously, "we have a solid financial basis with a sustainable future."

The seminary has gotten by with the help of its friends. It has attracted friends by making "partnership" the word of the day. There are partnerships everywhere. Bethany has formed a partnership with Earlham School of Religion, with whom it shares not only a campus but faculty and students as well. It has formed a partnership with the 100 or so area Brethren congregations in the Southern Ohio and South/Central Indiana districts. These churches regularly take in Bethany students for their field education during the second or "middler" year. And it has formed a partnership with eastern Brethren through its Susquehanna Valley Satellite operation in Elizabethtown, Pa.

A key partnership is the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, set up last fall and jointly funded by Bethany and the General Board's Office of Ministry [See "Wanted: A new Heart for Ministry," MESSENGER, April 1998.] The academy combined non-degree programs that had been under a program called the Bethany Academy, and the General Board's EFSM and TRIM certificate programs for training licensed ministers who are not able to pursue a graduate degree in regular seminary classes. Coordinators of the Brethren Academy are Harriet and Ron Finney, who share one full-time position with an office at the seminary.

"Partnerships take time and effort, but they also broaden the number of people working toward ministry training," says Harriet Finney. "The best way to go about expansion is to form partnerships."

The Academy sponsors weekend "intensive" classes, summer extension schools like the one to be held this year at Juniata College, and week-long class offerings like this year's January class on Brethren heritage, which attracted 33 students.

Tricia Sadd

A workshop *led by Jean Janzen.*

Possibilities for expanding educational opportunities for the church are endless. Next fall the Academy plans to help train 20 lay leaders in "creative church leadership." Continuing education for pastors through advanced seminars may be in the future. The Academy is facilitating grants for educational events in Congregational Life Team areas.

Richard Gardner, the academic dean, said the seminary is looking for new ways to use computer technology to perform "distance education," which is what Bethany calls taking education to people rather than just bringing people to the campus.

"My dream," says Marcia Shetler, associate for public relations, "is that when people think of developing lay leadership and spiritual leadership in the church, people will automatically think of Bethany."

Murray Wagner, veteran professor of church history, said that some seminaries have dropped the non-degree education programs that were called Bible training schools, as Bethany did at one time in order to "maintain respectability." But now the Brethren Academy, which he calls "the old Bible training school put together in a new way," is being envied and emulated by other seminaries. Besides benefiting the church by making educational opportunities widely available, it keeps the seminary in touch with the church. "We see a lot of congregations. We get into some places we wouldn't otherwise visit."

Developing grassroots educational opportunities in cooperation with the General Board, churches, and districts has kept the seminary in touch with the larger church. But keeping in touch with all these partners has also been exhausting work for the faculty and staff who are involved in constant meetings and frequent travel. President Roop addressed these often unseen costs when he outlined for the trustees future challenges.

"Partnership education, like attention to community which is so important to Brethren, is expensive in terms of energy," he said. "While we cannot pull back from our partnerships, we must look repeatedly for ways in which the partnerships will work efficiently as well as effectively." Though he didn't propose a specific remedy, he said the current faculty and staff can't continue to handle all the work involved in partnerships.

Bethany has focused nearly all its efforts on ministry education. And students like David Miller, 38, are what the seminary has to show for it. Joining a steady stream of second-career students, Miller came from Maryland to Bethany after 15 years as a computer programmer. He says he thinks he experienced a call, though

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Brethrening

Service with a smile

The signboard in front of our church is sadly in need of repair. As a result, one snowy night last winter, someone with a sense of humor was able to make some slight changes in its wording. When we arrived for worship the next day, the board was announcing to the community that we were going to have an "Undy" Service. Since we do own and operate a daycare center which cares for infants as young as six weeks old, it occurred to us that the signboard was at least still truthful. For we do have both Undy and Sunday services. —MARILYN SCOTT

Marilyn Scott is pastor of the Naperville (Ill.) Church of the Brethren.

MESSENGER *would like to publish other short, colorful, and humorous stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submissions to* MESSENGER, *Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at ffarrar_gb@brethren.org.*

Music is an *important part of Bethany's program.*

Bethany Theological Seminary

Steve Reid leads an "intensive," a short course open to non-degree students.

"for me it was more of a gentle nudging than a blind flashing light."

One reason he thinks the call to seminary was authentically from God is that "it made no sense at the time." He was happy in his work, had just recently moved, and he and his wife had two small children. But when his wife, his pastor, and his congregation shared in the nudging he felt toward seminary, Miller felt that the call was confirmed.

Three years ago the Millers set off for Indiana. The transition wasn't easy, requiring difficult adjustments in household economics. "We had to hand things over to God to make this work," he said. Miller thrived at Bethany, which he found to be an exciting place full of ideas and energy in its new life. He was elected to head student government.

"The most valuable things I learned in seminary were about myself," he says. "I learned about the value of reflection." He found useful a course in constructive theology, which taught him how to develop his own theology after study. For example, he said, he had always had trouble understanding the meaning of the cross. So he studied the issue and developed a sermon that he delivered in chapel, focusing on "the ways we face death every day in change and letting go."

Miller said the Bethany experience changed him as a person. "My intent was to get academic training in how to do ministry," he says. "But I learned how to be a minister." A few weeks before graduation he was called to be pastor of the West Richmond Church of the Brethren in Richmond, Va. Noting that he has never performed a wedding or a funeral, Miller is green but excited. He begins his new vocation this summer.

"We have something special to offer," says Murray Wagner, professor of church history. "We have a communal style of education. We practice church." Wagner says Bethany is neither evangelical nor liberal but has found "a third way." That way, he says, is to ask: "How does the community together appropriate what the Scriptures are saying?"

Wagner describes Bethany's approach as "narrative theology," which he defines as "theology as the telling of the story." Students are taught to find their own story inside the larger biblical story. "The story changes as life changes. But it is always informed by the tradition of the God who is ever-faithful."

The seminary itself is finding its place in the biblical story after its exodus from Oak Brook and its new life with a narrower, more focused mission. What Wagner says about narrative theology applies to Bethany: "We are always on the way. On the pilgrimage. In process. The only constant is change."

Heed their hindsight

Check your insurance

and other advice from three congregations recovering from fires

Wendy McFadden

BY FLETCHER FARRAR

"We were definitely underinsured."

—Barry Conn, pastor, Pike Run Church of the Brethren, Somerset, Pa., destroyed by arson Jan. 27, 1998.

"We were underinsured. And we didn't have enough contents insurance."

—Erin Matteson, pastor, Faith Church of the Brethren, Batavia, Ill., heavily damaged by fire March 2, 1998.

"We were underinsured on our contents. We wish we had done a better job on that. We lost our entire library."

—Susan Stern Boyer, pastor, Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind., destroyed by fire Jan. 7, 1998.

Though it is a coincidence that three Brethren churches experienced devastating fires early this year, the combination serves to put other churches on notice to check their preparedness. The three congregations that have experienced losses are eager to tell their stories for the benefit of others.

Their stories are not all negative, to be sure. In each case the pastors expressed appreciation for their insurance companies, and their willingness to go beyond the letter of a contract to provide repair and healing. And each expressed gratitude for a general outpouring of love and concern. "We have learned that we are brothers and sisters to people all over this town that we never knew before," said Susan Boyer, pastor of the North Manchester congregation.

But if they'd had it to do all over again, these churches would have done things differently. Their stories:

Pike Run is a small rural congregation where 40 to 45 usually worship on Sunday. Because the building was isolated with no close neighbors to check on it, someone was able to approach the church and break a window to start the fire, leaving footprints in the snow. Though two other nearby churches had been recently destroyed by fires blamed on arson, the congregation has no clear idea of what the motive might have been. The fire was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, but the church has so far heard no word from those agencies.

When we asked in April for a status report, the building ruins had been removed and the foundation filled in. Pastor Barry Conn said he hoped the church would start construction on a new building this spring. A building committee has preliminary plans calling for a single-story structure that would seat 150 and include a "good-sized" fellowship hall. It would be built on the same property but farther from the road.

"They are looking for a contractor who will work with volunteer labor," Conn said. He said the church is not planning to hire an architect.

Rebuilding is made more difficult by the fact that the old building wasn't insured for nearly enough to pay for the planned replacement, which Conn says will cost at least $300,000, based on an estimate of $50 per square foot.

Construction costs vary by region, but many insurance professionals advise estimating construction costs at at least $85 per square foot. They suggest multiplying the square footage of the existing building by $85 and insuring for at least that amount.

Conn declined to disclose the amount of Pike Run's insurance settlement. The church has already received a check for 75 percent of the total, and will be given the other 25 percent if the congregation rebuilds.

Conn said the new building will make use of used pews donated by a Catholic church, and a donated organ, one of 13 used organs offered the church. The donations are welcomed particularly because the church contents were insured for $13,000, only about half what the congregation estimates replacement cost to be. "It's little things you don't think about," said Conn. "Like the pulpit, offering plates, the copier, piano, and organ."

Wendy McFadden

Manchester's stained glass *window (opposite) and sanctuary were open to the sky following the fire.*

Though the insurance amount was low, the church has high praise for its insurance company, Brotherhood Mutual. "We've been with this company for a long time," Conn said. "They have been very good to us."

He said that when the church wanted to make donations to each of the eight volunteer fire departments that responded to the fire, the insurance company agreed to reimburse the church, even though that was not included in the policy. Insurance reimbursed Conn for his personal books that were lost in the fire. And the insurance company is paying the cost of renting the restaurant where worship services are now held. Even so, the pastor said, "It is really tough to worship in a restaurant."

Pike Run has already received some $70,000 in donated cash, mostly from local groups, to help in the rebuilding.

Though the fire was in January, the burned-out hulk of the Manchester Church of the Brethren was still standing this spring while the congregation waited for state certification that asbestos had been removed properly before demolition could proceed. Despite this grim daily reminder of its loss, the Manchester church is facing the future with confidence.

That's partly because insurance coverage on the building had been reviewed not long ago, during the process of planning for a $1.6 million education wing addition, which was less than a third finished at the time of the fire. Because the total coverage amount was adequate for replacement cost, insurance loss payments from the old building should provide a new building that meets the needs of the congregation. The 300 to 400 who attend on Sunday now meet in Manchester College's 1,300-seat Cordier Auditorium, which swallows up the grateful worshippers.

With its insurance settlement in the bank, the congregation has been enthusiastically working through a discernment process to "envision" its future needs. Though the church had been in the midst of a building program already, the fire means that now the church may plan anew. "We want our building to fit our ministry," said Susan Boyer, pastor. In a series of meetings held over two months, the congregation wrote a statement listing five themes to be incorporated into its new building. The themes are flexibility, accessibility, simplicity, environmental responsibility, and beauty. The statement received strong approval in a church council meeting.

Next is a process for the congregation to discern where to build. A decision on whether to stay on its old site or move to a new one was expected by early June. If the decision is to move, another process would be launched to pick the site.

Though insurance on the building was adequate, coverage on the contents is another story. "We're not sure what we lost," Boyer said. "We were underinsured on our contents." Boyer said records were inadequate for the books in the library, which was destroyed. The music library was destroyed too, but at least the sheet music had been inventoried recently.

The building was insured by Mutual Aid Association of Abilene, Kan., which insures many Brethren congregations. Boyer said that while the congregation doesn't agree on everything, there is near-consensus on one thing: "We're extremely glad

Nevin Dulabaum

The intense heat *from the Batavia fire wreaked havoc on plastic items in Erin Matteson's second-floor study . . .*

Nevin Dulabaum

. . . while leaving bulletins and hymnals on a lectern near the fire's point of origin virtually unscathed.

we were insured by Mutual Aid. They came right away. They flew in three people from Kansas. They talked openly and directly with us."

She said a local priest whose congregation had experienced a fire advised her to hire an arbitrator and prepare to do battle with its insurance firm. "But we felt that we were a team with Mutual Aid, rather than adversaries," she said.

Asked what advice she would offer, Boyer said fire prevention would be the best thing to look at first. And make an evacuation plan. Though the fire started at night when no one was at the building, "we realized afterward that our children's Sunday school room would have been a firetrap." Finally, she said, check your insurance annually.

And continue to thank God for blessings and help that come out of a disaster. As just one example of the generosity extended to the Manchester church, the Springfield (Ore.) congregation, which had experienced a fire some years ago, sent a $500 Brethren Press gift certificate to help the church replenish its supplies. Manchester has designated its spring special offering to be divided between its fellow fire victims, Pike Run and Faith congregations.

Faith Church of the Brethren, Batavia, Ill., has a new message to carry to other churches. "Part of our responsibility now is to say that insurance is important," said Erin Matteson, pastor. "All our churches get too much into a maintenance mode, and important things get left by the wayside."

After the March 2 fire that heavily damaged the Batavia sanctuary and did lesser damage to other parts of the building, the congregation learned that it had been insured only for the depreciated value of the church, not for its replacement cost. How that was allowed to happen has been the source of consternation for church officials, some of whom feel that had the insurance been explained better they would have insured better. "But that's not important now," says the pastor, who is trying to help the congregation concentrate on the future, not the past.

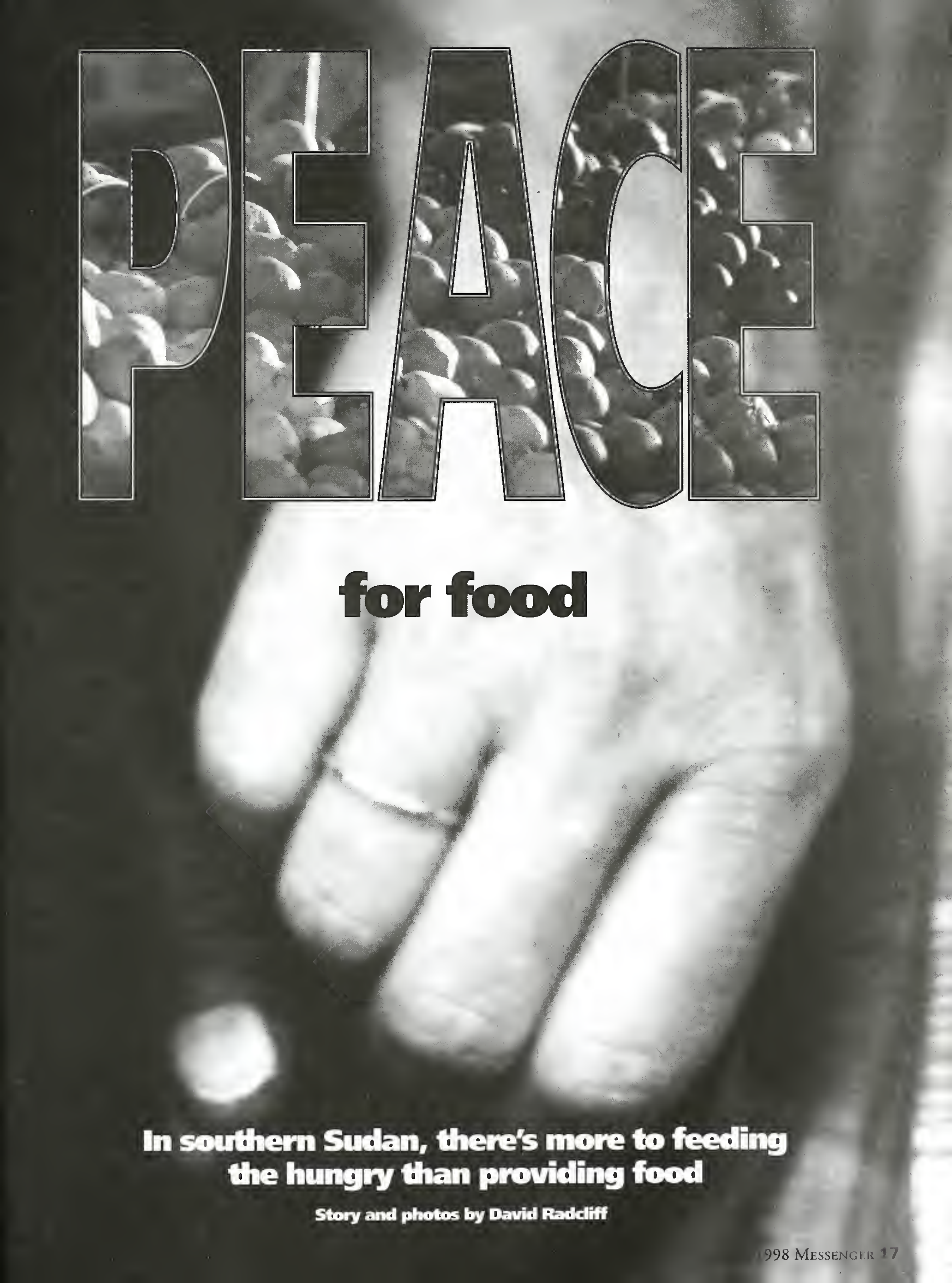
The Batavia church was also covered by Mutual Aid Association, which is working with the small congregation to come up with a solution. In April the church was awaiting a proposal from a contractor for what repairs would cost using volunteer labor, and a price for repair without volunteer labor.

Matteson said the insurance firm was planning to evaluate the repair proposal to see if it might be feasible to go ahead anyway, rather than strictly enforcing coverage limits. Though a satisfactory result may come out of this, clearly all parties would be more comfortable had the insurance coverage been adequate to replace the loss.

Faith Church is now holding its worship services at a funeral home, which is providing the space at no charge. The temporary arrangement only required a half-hour change in the regular meeting time. The congregation has been gratified by many donations and kindnesses, including letters of encouragement from Brethren around the country who have had some connection to the church over the years, one as long ago as the 1920s.

Like the two other fire-experienced pastors, Matteson advises churches to look also at their contents coverage, and make sure there is an up-to-date inventory. "It's a big job to do a full contents inventory," she said. "We should have had a better file." Some churches may question whether they should make a claim on items that were donated. "Put it on the inventory anyway. Be aware of what you have. You can decide what to replace later." Matteson, who lost about $5,000 in personal items, including a laptop computer, suggests that pastors make sure their possessions in the church building are covered, as hers were.

"Reevaluate your insurance," she says. "Reevaluate all the time. Every time you build a new addition or add an elevator or make an improvement, reevaluate your insurance." M.



PEACE for food

In southern Sudan, there's more to feeding the hungry than providing food

Story and photos by David Radcliff

"How can we live in peace when our basic needs for food, clothing, water go unmet? And how can we have these things, until we live in peace?"

Posed by a Christian leader at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in northern Kenya, these questions sharply summarized the dilemma faced by southern Sudan's war-weary people. Driven from their homes to makeshift communities within and outside the country, millions of Sudanese experience these twin truths on a daily basis. Violent conflicts break out over things as simple as possession of the water containers so vital to carrying water from a community's few wells. And yet, had the people not been driven from their homes and traditional water sources by the war, these conflicts might not exist.

These questions also pose a challenge for those who wish to stand by people in Sudan or people anywhere who live on the edge of survival. It is one thing to offer the cup of cold water in Christ's name, and this biblical mandate still longs for fulfillment. But when a war has driven people to places where water is scarce, or when sharing these scarce resources becomes a flashpoint for violence between competing groups, then the precious contents of the cup are more likely to be spilt than sipped. What is the compassionate Christian response in such a setting? Is our good will in sharing the cup or the rice or the seeds or the heifers enough, or do these gifts bring anything but temporary relief when other needs for peace, security, and assurance of equal treatment go unmet?

These were the questions confronting a group of five Brethren, four from the United States and one from Nigeria, during a recent visit to southern Sudan. Sponsored by the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships and Brethren Witness offices, the group had come with open minds and hearts to experience the situation and witness the renowned faith of the southern Sudanese, to show Christian support for them in their suffering, and to explore additional means of partnership with churches there.

The group was told that the war with the government of Sudan was the ultimate cause of their misery. The northern government has sought to impose Islamic law on the nation as a whole. It also seeks control of resources in the southern part of the country, all the while denying the south adequate political representation or access to economic development. And some think simple racism is also at work, as the mostly Arab north ravages the primarily black African south.

The Blessed Bakhita Girls School *in Narus is an oasis of opportunity and stability for 408 girls from across southern Sudan. Girls' education is vital for the health and future of families and communities.*

But at every stop along the Brethren group's 10-day journey men, women, and children, church leaders, and laity also were desperately concerned for things closer at hand. Time and time again, they sounded a plea for aid in their daily struggle to survive. The call, however, was not for bread alone, but also for help in achieving the things that make for peace.

For instance, the Justice and Peace committee at the Kakuma Camp is active in dealing with intertribal and interpersonal conflict at the sprawling camp, home to some 51,000 people, most of whom are Sudanese. Conflict often erupts at food distribution points, and when food supplies run low is a time for marauding bands to steal food.

And yet, said one church leader active in the peace work, "It is difficult to tell a person not to steal when they are stealing food to live." Another pastor told of apprehending a young person who had stolen a bicycle, a precious commodity in the large camp. When the young man explained that he had taken the bike ecause he had not eaten in three ays and sought to remedy this situaion, the pastor kissed him and gave im some of his best food.

On the whole, however, violence in he camp and throughout southern udan has taken on a troubling imension, thanks in part to the war nd the implements of war sold to he combatants from the nations of he world.

"The killing we see now was not aking place in the old days. The aping and killing of women and hildren, the burning of houses, the estruction of grain stores—you did ot see this then. There is widepread social erosion, disrespect for he chiefs, recruitment of children nto the army. The pattern has now hanged. Our weapons have made us nad," lamented chaplain Duku, an rticulate young church leader.

The work of the peace group at Kakuma, trained by Brethren partner he New Sudan Council of Churches, as been increasingly recognized as a nodel effort. Indeed, the United Nations is seeking to spread their pproach to other refugee communiies. There is also an urgency to their vork among the teeming masses of he camp. "Sometimes it seems that he world has become a place where veryone is simply looking out for hemselves," said Duku. "It is up to he church to shine a light to show nother way." These Christians are attempting to do just that.

Overseeing a school, *maintaining a clinic, hosting guests, working with other Christians—all part of Sister Doreen Oyela's mission in the resettlement community of New Cush.*

The Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace in the displaced community of Narus in southwest Sudan has been active in mediating conflicts within the church, the family, and the community. Said women's leader Flora, "Six of us went for seven days of training. In the beginning, we didn't see how this might work, but now we are able to call people together to solve community and family problems through the church."

Even here, however, peace work does not go unaffected by the broader physical situation. "We know that people would be so much more receptive to our message if we could also give them just a little bit of food. You can't convince someone to have peace in their heart if that person is hungry and also if the agent of peace is hungry as well. When I have gone to talk about peace with another woman," said Flora, "she will say to me, 'You leave me alone; I am suffering with my children.'" Indeed, over the past year an average of four to five children in Narus perished daily from hunger-related causes.

The requests of the community are simple: training for a tailoring or breadbaking cooperative, some emergency food rations for women and children in need, resources for a peace library, additional training for their peace committee. A strong sense began to emerge that all these are part of what it may take for there to be relative health and stability in this community.

An invigorating side trip in Narus was to the Blessed Bakhita Girls School on the outskirts of the community. Home to over 400 primary age girls, 100 of whom are orphans, the grounds of the school hum with

(continued on page 20)

Brethrening

Revive us again

've done a lot of revival meetings during my years of ministry. Several years ago I was serving in a revival meeting at he Blue River Church of the Brethren near Columbia City, Indiana. One evening during the week as five-year-old Elijah Kreider came into the church narthex with his parents, he inquistively looked up and asked, "Mom, are we having survival again tonight?"

—Paul W. Brubaker
Ephrata, Pa.

MESSENGER would like to publish other short, colorful, and humorous stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submissions to MESSENGER, Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 r e-mail to the editor at ffarrar_gb@brethren.org.

(Clockwise from top) **A troubling** *casualty of the war is the tens of thousands of children who are "unaccompanied minors"—separated from their families. Thankfully, this is not the case for young Mary, who lives with her baby sister and parents in Kakuma Camp.* **The combination** *of hunger, tribal fighting, and the daily struggles of life at the Kakuma Refugee Camp are a burden that weighs heavily on church leaders.* **Medical care** *and other basic services are minimal or nonexistent in many communities. This hospital built to serve 70 houses 700, many of whom, like this boy occupy a spot in a corridor. He is kept warm by a blanket provided by Church World Service.*

vitality. Girls soar in the air on one end of a pump handle bringing refreshing water. Others head to class, books under their arms, chatting and giggling with friends. When guests arrive, the entire school gathers to sing welcoming songs and Christian choruses. We learned that diversity is the order of the day, as the girls speak 24 native languages.

When the school was first founded 5 years ago, this sometimes led to conflict. Now the only scuffles are of the kind to be expected in a school setting. The schoolgrounds feel something like an oasis, a place of refuge amid a sweltering desert of violence and human need.

This was partly a mirage. "There are more girls wanting to enroll in our school, and we don't have adequate facilities. Our food supply at times runs short, and I have to beg donors for assistance," lamented headmistress Sister Rita. "And a few months ago, bombers from the north dropped bombs near the village on a Sunday. On Monday morning, the girls were still so distraught that they jumped at any sound. We decided to take them into the bush, away from the town. We stayed there for a week together, doing our lessons and singing. We would send back into town for supplies."

In a sense, the way had been paved for these visiting Brethren by an earlier Brethren visit. Sister Rita recalled with fondness that one Brethren woman pulled her aside as they were parting and said, "We didn't come with the intention of providing material support, but I remember that in the book of James we are told not to pass by a person in need saying only 'go in peace,' without giving them assistance. Please take this small gift." And she placed a one hundred dollar bill in her hand.

The education of girls anywhere in Sudan is extremely important—and often problematic. At the group's next stop, the 8,000-member displaced community of New Cush, the local Catholic sister explained that parents often keep their daughters from school after the first few grades. "They say it makes the girls stubborn," lamented Sister Doreen Oyela. "What they mean is that the girls may not want to go along with the marriage their family has arranged, where the daughter often goes to the man with the most cattle to offer, even if he is elderly. But it is women who carry the burden for work, community life, and the health of their families in southern Sudan. Their education is essential."

And the facts bear this out. While three quarters of the world's illiterate are women, when women do have access to education, the benefits are widespread. Educated mothers understand how to care for their children, and the children then eat better and have better health. Educated women tend to have fewer children, reducing food demands on a strained food system. And literate

Delegation members *(from left) Fletcher Farrar, Marty Barlow, Heather Nolen, and James Zoaka focus on a resentation by a Sudanese Christian. Zoaka, from EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, brought a aluable cross-Africa perspective to the group. His resence was made possible by the Global Mission Partnership Office.*

women are much more likely to lead conomically productive lives, creating more options and a better life for heir children.

At New Cush the Brethren visitors gain heard a refrain of needs: clothing, school supplies, food for the hildren and pregnant mothers, ools, seeds, and water containers. When we had a feeding program for he kindergartners," Doreen said, we would tell the children to go home at noon. They would tell us hat they didn't want to, there was no ood at home."

The monthly ration for a typical New Cush resident is 14 cups of orghum flour, half a mug of cooking oil, and 2 mugs of lentils. When this meager supply is combined with an El Niño-related drought last season, he food situation is extremely tenuous. It was here that women's group member Deborah told us, "All of my children have died, but I have not ost my faith in Christ."

Another woman noted with appreciation the presence of women in the Brethren group. "Other visitors have always been men. You mothers can understand our situation. You know he problems of the women where you live; our problems are the same."

And it was Rhoda who issued a direct challenge to the visitors. "Three other groups came to see us, and we have had no reply from them. If you are Christians, you will not deceive us."

Feeding the hungry. In some ways it seems like such a simple matter. And there are times, particularly in the wake of a natural disaster, that simple shipments of food aid can do the trick. But in many other situations affecting millions of the world's people, those who would feed the hungry need to consider a wide array of factors that affect whether the cup will be sipped or spilt.

These women from Narus, *with their US visitors.are members of the Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace, a movement to promote reconciliation on the national and community level. They attended a week-long training sponsored by the New Sudan Council of Churches. One obstacle to their efforts is the hunger of their neighbors, for whom finding food is often more pressing than finding peace.*

For many people, there is little or no access to the land they need to grown their own food: the good land has been snapped up by those with wealth or by corporations growing food for export. Racial and ethnic tension keeps large segments of some nations from having a decent opportunity for economic development. Lack of education, especially for women, does not allow people to fully develop their potential and their potential of feeding their families. In other places, weapons from the outside make conflicts more deadly, and the social disruption much more severe, which in turn disrupts food security. And for many, there are not available channels or skills for dealing with conflicts that inevitably emerge, and people suffer the consequences by being displaced or having food stores ravaged.

As a denomination, we want to assist the hungry people of the world in having the food they need to survive and flourish. As we are learning in Sudan and elsewhere, our shipments of seeds and tools and food relief also need to be accompanied by an ample supply of the things that make for peace: conflict resolution training, human rights advocacy, and opportunities for education and economic development. Together these help insure that the cup of cold water can be enjoyed as the thirst-quenching gift it was meant to be. *M.*

David Radcliff is director of Brethren Witness on the General Board staff. At the July 2 MESSENGER Dinner at Annual Conference Radcliff will present a program, "Sights, sounds, and stories from southern Sudan."

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the fetal tissue issue

a cautious approval that Conference rejected

BY JAMES BENEDICT

How dare we kill innocent babies just to make things a little easier for old people?"

It was not so much a question as an accusation. Others at the hearing looked expectantly toward me as I stood at the podium. I took a deep breath. Then I tried once again to describe the process by which fetal tissue becomes available for transplantation and its many potential uses for recipients of various ages—including a case in which fetal tissue was transplanted into another fetus *in utero*.

The asking and answering of that particular question took place last year four days before delegates to the Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren rejected a position paper that expressed cautious and limited approval of fetal tissue use in the treatment of disease or injury. It will be up to the 1998 Annual Conference Standing Committee to recommend what future action, if any, should be taken.

The question about killing babies to benefit the elderly did more than produce a tense moment. It also reflected two features common to most arguments against fetal tissue use: strong emotion and caricature-like perception of the practice of fetal tissue procurement and transplantation. Current fetal tissue therapy and experimentation programs in the US obtain fetal tissue from legal abortions under strict National Institutes of Health guidelines. These guidelines insist on anonymity between donor and recipient (so one cannot direct that fetal tissue be donated to help a loved one) and forbid payment to the woman who makes tissue available, thus undercutting what might otherwise be strong incentives for abortion.

The guidelines also require that signed consent to abort be obtained before the option of fetal tissue donation is discussed. The goal is to keep separate the decision to abort and the decision to allow the fetal tissue to be used. Indeed, the woman seeking the abortion does not know with certainty that her fetal tissue will be used, thus limiting the significance of general altruism as an incentive to abort.

Fetal tissue obtained under these guidelines is used or may one day be used to treat a wide range of conditions, most notably neural, hematological, and endocrine disorders. The condition which has received the most publicity is Parkinson's Syndrome, which commonly manifests itself among older persons. This has led to the charge that fetal tissue use sacrifices the very young in order to benefit those who have already had a long, full life. Other promising uses of fetal tissue, however, include the treatment of conditions hardly restricted to the elderly: diabetes, spinal cord damage, and blood diseases.

In many ways, fetal tissue transplantation is merely an extension of organ donation, which has been under way for decades. Instead of replacing whole organs, however, fetal tissue therapy replaces groups of missing or defective cells. Fetal tissue has two advantages over tissue from adults or even newborns. First, fetal cells are relatively undifferentiated and therefore more versatile in their ability to establish residency and function normally in a recipient. Second, fetal cells are less readily recognized as foreign by the recipient's immune system and therefore are less likely to be rejected.

Those who favor using fetal tissue often concede that elective abortion is morally troubling. Some call it a sin, or even "murder." But they argue that this does not preclude the possibility of using the tissue, since organs and tissues for transplant typically come from tragic events, including murder. They claim that agreeing to the use of fetal tissue does not imply approval of past abortions or encouragement of future abortions, any more than the transplantation of a heart or kidney implies approval of—or encourages—drunk driving, domestic violence or drive-by shootings.

Yet as opponents to the use of fetal tissue are quick to point out, the use of tissue from elective abortions differs in at least two important ways from the common practice of using organs and tissues from people who have died. First, organs and tissues for transplantation from the "post-born" tend to become available

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hrough events that are either unin- ended or illegal. The primary source of fetal tissue (elective abortion), on he other hand, is both intentional and legal. Many opponents to fetal issue use believe that without legal anctions against elective abortion, he widespread, successful use of etal tissue to heal will inevitably lead o abortions that would not otherwise have occurred.

The second important difference between fetal tissue use and other issue and organ transplantation concerns the issue of consent. Consent to use hearts, kidneys, corneas, and ungs typically comes from the next of kin, who may know the donor's own eelings or expressed wishes about donation. Further, that next of kin would only in rare cases be responsible for the death of the donor. By ontrast, consent for the use of fetal issue is made by the woman who has equested the abortion.

Many who favor fetal tissue use in general see a problem here. Some have suggested establishing bioethics ommittees to offer or deny consent on a case-by-case basis. Others have alled for a policy of presumed con- ent, under which the tissue may be ollected for use unless the woman or in some cases another family member) objects. Still others have expressed their concern about con- ent through semantics, insisting that only the fetus itself be called the donor," or that the tissue be eferred to as the woman's "contribution" but not as her "gift."

Because of the legality of abortion and the knotty problems that arise around the matter of consent, it is mpossible to regard fetal tissue use as he ethical equivalent of organ and issue transplantation from postborn donors. But this does not necessarily mean that Christian faith requires us o avoid or forbid participation in fetal issue experimentation or therapy.

Those who oppose the use of fetal issue tend to ignore how often cripture and tradition emphasize healing, even in ways that raise moral concerns. According to the Jewish radition, all but three commandments in the Torah may be violated in order to save a life (idolatry, adultery, and murder). Jesus was well within this tradition when he violated purity and Sabbath law in his own ministry of healing.

Scripture and tradition thus challenge arguments against fetal tissue use based on the moral questions surrounding the issue of consent and concerns about appearing to endorse the act of abortion. The obligation to save and heal takes precedence over these.

What remains to be considered are the effects that widespread, successful use of fetal tissue may have on the number of subsequent abortions, and the degree to which those who recommend, transplant or accept fetal tissue will be responsible for those effects. As long as the guidelines require anonymity between donor and recipient and prohibit any form of compensation for women whose fetuses are used, general altruism would be the only added incentive for women to seek abortions. Most who have considered the issue, especially women, tend to feel this would lead to few additional abortions, if any. The physical and emotional risks of abortion are simply too great to be significantly influenced by the idea that one's abortion might possibly do a stranger some good.

Still, one cannot deny the possibility that a woman might be moved to abort by the thought that her abortion might do someone some good through fetal tissue transplantation. In this case, the parallel with organ and tissue donation from postborn donors is apt. There is certainly nothing to prevent a would-be murderer from deciding to go ahead on the basis of his knowledge that the intended victim has an organ donor card. Although both scenarios are highly unlikely, neither is completely beyond the realm of imagination. The point is that the act is not justified by the incentive. Those who have retrieved, transplanted, or received tissues and organs in the past are not morally responsible for the decision the other person made.

In the biblical description of the entry of suffering and evil into human experience (Gen. 3), it is made clear that suffering and evil become intertwined with the good that God has created. All our efforts to alleviate one particular form of suffering involve the risk of perpetuating or increasing some other form of suffering. This is clearly the case when we consider the unfortunate symbiotic relationship between elective abortion and fetal tissue transplantation.

Some Christians may choose to suffer or die rather than benefit from an act they consider morally reprehensible or risk creating a morally insufficient incentive for any future abortion. Our tradition of respect for individual conscience, grounded in New Testament teaching (e.g. Rom. 14:13ff.), leads us to acknowledge the validity of such a perspective. Patients must always be informed of the intention to use fetal tissue so that those who wish may decline it.

But those who might choose to suffer or even die themselves do not have the right to require others to become unwilling martyrs. In cases where no other treatment of equal or greater effectiveness is available, and the guidelines prohibiting designated donations and payment are followed, persons may recommend, choose, and participate in fetal tissue transplantation without violating their covenant with God or the church.

We should vigorously pursue the research and development of treatment options that may decrease or replace the use of fetal tissue. We should renew and continue efforts to reduce the number of abortions, without regard for how the reduction might affect the supply of fetal tissue for transplantation. We should hope for and work toward a time in which the use of tissue from elective abortions is replaced by other treatments. But meanwhile, we must live with respect and compassion in this time when fetal tissue is the last, best, or only hope for some.

James Benedict is pastor of Union Bridge (Md.) Church of the Brethren. He was chair of the Annual Conference study committee on human genetic engineering and fetal tissue use, which was appointed in 1995. In 1995 he received a master of sacred theology degree from Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa., where he studied New Testament and end-of-life decision making.

Whatever happened to Sunday school?

BY D. EUGENE LICHTY

What is happening to the Sunday school? I realize that is not the current name for it. During my pastoral ministry of more than 25 years we tried to change it to the church school. But that confused it with parochial day schools. Now it seems to loosely fall under the topic of Christian education, which is so inclusive than one must particularize it. At least most all of us know what I am writing about when I call it the Sunday school.

When I was a youth, more than a half century ago, in the South Waterloo (Iowa) Church of the Brethren, I recall a concern discussed frequently among our members. It was, "How can we convince parents and their children who come for Sunday school to remain for the church service?" The church register board consistently showed a larger attendance for Sunday school than for the worship hour.

In those days the church was growing. Today, when I return to that same church, plus an added Christian education building, the Sunday school attendance will be approximately half that of the worship service. The same can be observed in many of our churches. What has happened? With millions of dollars spent on educational buildings and additions, upgraded curricula, better educated teachers, modern audiovisuals, copy machines, and other technological goodies, we have empty classrooms, smaller classes, and decreasing attendance. Along with that goes smaller worship attendance, and a decline in membership of the church at large.

According to Church of the Brethren Yearbooks, average Sunday school attendance in 1955 was 105,000. By 1996 it had dropped to 46,000. Church attendance in the same year was 86,000. I was unable to find church attendance for 1955. Our net gain in membership in 1955 was 2,010. By 1996 we had a net loss of 1,310. If this trend continues, what will our membership be in another 40 years? And what kind of a Sunday school will remain?

How much interest has been shown in the Sunday school through our official church publication, MESSENGER? To get some indication, I examined the annual indexes of 13 of the last 14 years. There is no longer an index topic entitled "Sunday school." Five of the 13 years included a total of 11 articles on "Christian education." Among these, only 3 made reference to the Sunday school. Nearly half of the 11 articles were in one special issue (May/June 1989) lifting up "Christian education in the Church of the Brethren." The editor introduced these articles with a paragraph above a drawing of the tree of knowledge. It is appropriate to quote a portion of it:

"Today we take Christian education for granted—perhaps too much so. In the cluster of articles that follows, we lift up Christian education as an area as worthy of our concern and support today as it was 200 years ago at the Great Conestoga Annual Meeting of 1789."

Just how concerned have we been? For the next seven years there were only four articles listed under Christian Education. If we invite someone to come to "church" does that refer to the Sunday school? Most likely not. Too often we are even apologetic when we speak of the Sunday school. Why? After all, was not Jesus better known as the master teacher rather than a great preacher? Even the so-called Sermon on the Mount was more of a class lecture than a sermon. This is not to diminish the importance of the worship service. Frequently, however, the Sunday chool has become a kind of warmup ime for the worship service that cusomarily follows. A considerable umber in our Sunday school class eave 15 to 20 minutes early to robe nd practice with the choir, or to ake their stations as greeters, shers, deacons, or other duties. Vhat would we think if as many vorshipers walked out in the middle f the sermon to prepare a church inner or some other function unday after Sunday?

The 1990 Messengers had one eference under "Christian educaion." It reported a national study nade by Religious News Service: Of all the areas of congregational fe we examined, involvement in an ffective Christian education proram has the strongest tie to a erson's growth in faith and to loylty to one's congregation and enomination." Does this not speak o our current condition? At a time vhen less than half our membership attends worship on a given Sunday and less than one fourth will be in Sunday school, and at a time when we must "redesign" our church organization primarily because reduced loyalty is reflected by our giving less than 3 percent of our abundant incomes to the church, maybe we should again give the Sunday school its rightful priority.

How might we do this?It is not my intention here to propose remedies. This was done in a 1992 Messenger article by Phyllis Carter, which could profitably be repeated. It was entitled, "How to revive your Sunday school"(February, p. 22). My intention is to raise the concern for discussion in Messenger and elsewhere. Why do not our church-related colleges and seminary provide some therapy for what appears to be a sick and maybe dying educational arm of the church? How many queries have been brought to Annual Conference in the past 25 years involving the Sunday school? As our membership becomes more and more biblically illiterate, maybe we need to take another look at Bible study in the Sunday school. As the number of available professional ministers decreases, perhaps the Sunday school needs to again become the forcus for new churches as it did a century ago when the first meetings were Sunday school classes held in homes and country schools, taught by lay men and women.

The current condition of the Sunday school seems to me to be a significant concern. Hopefully, others will come with significant remedies or a better substitute for the Sunday school.

D. Eugene Lichty of McPherson, Kan. was a pastor for 25 years in Missouri, Ohio, and Arizona. He also served as director of development for McPherson College, a position from which he retired in 1990. At press time he was returning from a trip to Bangkok, Thailand.

Brethrening

Communion Bread 101

t's time to make communion bread. I don't know how to reate this special holy symbol, so I take my place among he seasoned deacon women to participate in and learn his time-honored task.

Who could count the number of times these all-knowing vomen have gathered with expectancy to prepare this very pecial bread?

First we prepare the dough.

"I don't think anyone would mind if we used half & half, lo you?"says one.

"We've used it before, haven't we? And it turned out all ight," chimes in another.

"OK, we'll use half & half."

Next we mix until the dough "feels right." When it does ve sit, pour coffee, and divide the dough among us. We egin kneading. When one of the ladies decides its "time," ve toss our sacrament-in-progress to the person on our eft.

The tossing to the left continues. "Just how long do we nead?"

"Don't we usually go for about an hour?" says one deaconess.

"One cookbook says you go 30 minutes," says another.

"I've read you just knead till it's done," claims yet nother.

"Sounds to me like you just keep kneading until you've un out of gossip," is my contribution. Everyone laughs. Ve knead until Lois has to leave for an appointment.

Time to roll the dough into the special pans and mark the pieces.

"Do we go five ruler widths across and four down? I can't remember."

Now fork poking. I asked if it mattered how many pokes per piece or how deep. Apparently this is not a critical issue in our congregation.

"No, it doesn't matter. Just some."

How hot should the oven be set to bake this holy symbol of Christ's body broken for us?

"Don't we just bake it in a hot enough oven until it's done?"

By this time I have to laugh and exclaim,

"You guys have been making communion bread together forever. Yet, you act like you've never made it before! Don't you have a recipe or something?"

The reply was simple...

"Hazel knew how. We just did what she told us. Now that she isn't here, we have to remember it on our own."

Class dismissed.

If I'm the next generation of communion bread bakers, next time, I'm taking notes! —Marsha Miller Neher

Marsha Miller Neher is a new deaconess at the Sunnyslope Church, Wenatchee, Wash. She is a registered nurse, mother of three daughters, and married to Ken Neher, director of Funding for the General Board.

Messenger *would like to publish other short, colorful, and humorous stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submissions to* Messenger, *Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at ffarrar_gb@brethren.org.*

Letters

The Nigerian church wants to be "closest of family" with us. They do not want to live as abandoned stepchildren.

Different from other churches in Nigeria

(In response to May Messenger *articles on the 75th anniversary of Brethren partnerships in Nigeria.)*

January 17 to February 17 I was part of the 20-member workcamp in Nigeria, building a girls dorm for a new EYN (Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) secondary school near Mubi. During our first evening at Kano, Mervin Keeney, director of Global Ministry Partnerships, shared some stories about Albert Helser, one of the pioneer missionaries to Nigeria.

When they began their services in Nigeria in 1923, Stover Kulp insisted that the mission must include hospitals and schools. Albert Helser said, "No, the focus must be on evangelism. Getting involved in those other things would only slow them down." So intense was the disagreement that eventually Helser left, joining the Sudan Interior Mission which formed ECWA, the Evangelical Church of West Africa.

Kulp's tradition lives on. Across 75 years, nearly 500 missionaries have worked at helping the Nigerians develop a full gospel ministry.

Karagama Gadzama, egg farmer and vice president of EYN, when asked if EYN is different, said what many are quick to say; "Today EYN has been engaged in digging wells and offering seedlings to villagers to help preserve the water table. They have built 18 dispensaries across Nigeria and are training workers for these." They practice what they call a holistic approach to the gospel: the whole gospel for the whole person.

In 1972 the Church of the Brethren turned the Nigerian church over to the Nigerians. Nigerians hold the positions of leadership. We play supportive roles.

At a final celebrative event at the close of our workcamp, I sat with Toma, Nigerian principal of our ministerial training school at Kulp Bible College. I contrasted his role as a Nigerian heading our theological training school with a wonderful American missionary couple from another denomination. That white man was the head of their denomination's Nigerian seminary. Our seminary is run by a Nigerian. Toma said, "That's the Brethren."

I told how John and Janet Tubbs, our one remaining missionary couple in Garkida, have a home which is always accessible. Even at mealtime they are interrupted by visitors: students, staff of the Mason Technical School, visitors passing through. Then we went to a long-term missionary couple's home for a meal. They were gracious hosts. Their home was several miles out a dirt road, removed from the nearest town. There were high walls with barbed wire on top, and barking dogs and a Nigerian security guard. In stark contrast with the open home of the Tubbs. Toma said, "That's the Brethren."

Ekklesiar Yan'uwa Nigeria is the name they have chosen for themselves. I asked some seventh-grade students, "What does EYN mean?" They said, "Church of the Brethren." But Yan'uwa means more than "Brethren." It means "children of one mother." In Nigeria, a man may have several wives. But to be children of one mother is to be the closest of family. Sometimes when we spoke before groups in Nigeria, I introduced myself as being from EY-USA.

The Nigerian church wants to be "closest of family" with us. They do not want to live as abandoned stepchildren. They very much want someone to come teach Brethren doctrine to all of their new pastors who must attend Kulp Bible College. They want a Brethren professor at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. They want the closest of ties with us.

Despite having their schools and hospitals taken from them and given to the government and being dirt poor, they remain joyous, faithful, committed to being Brethren. Today, EYN is one of the fastest growing churches in the world. They are different from other denominations in Nigeria: in their focus, in the placement of power (with Nigerians now in full control), and in their approach to mission. We should be proud to count them as one of us: the closest of family. And we should do everything we can to develop the strongest ties possible.

Wayne Zunkel
Elizabethtown, Pa.

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations.

Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine.

We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer's name is kept in strictest confidence.

Address letters to Messenger *editor, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.*

ealing with death

consider Dale Aukerman's article
n "Living with Dying" [Messenger,
pril 1998] one of the most signifi-
ant articles Messenger has carried
n many months. Most of us put off
ealing with death because it is such
n unknown, and therefore frighten-
ng. And death brings physical pain.
et I know death can happen to any
ne of us at any time. How do I deal
ith all this? Dale's sharing provides
nportant and helpful insights into
is personal journey.

It's one thing to say that death is
e doorway to eternal life; it's quite
nother discussion to deal on a per-
onal level with one's own death,
ith all its dimensions. Most of us
re not well equipped to do so; we
earn on the job."

Through his own search, Dale is
ble to share some important biblical
nderstandings of both living and
ying. Whether or not we agree with
ale, I applaud him for sharing so
ntimately of his journey, and,
ereby, pushing me on to reflect
ore on my journey. Thank you,
ale, and Messenger.

Louise D. Bowman
Bluemont, Va.

Vill you hire my friend?

n answer to your recent advertise-
ent for pastors in Messenger, I am
leased to share with you about my
ood friend who fits your require-
ents perfectly. She has invested
me, energy, and prayer in her spiri-
ual growth, and she has been a
ource of inspiration for others in
er congregation. She has studied
e Bible, she has spoken out for jus-
ce for oppressed peoples, and she
ntegrates spirituality and peacemak-
ng. She has been a church leader,
he has worked in church education,
nd she has a commitment to per-
onal and spiritual growth.

In the last two years this friend has slowly and carefully discerned God's call to enter the ministry, she has spent prayerful time to clarify this call, and she is now prepared to enter the next phase of her preparation.

My friend fits your advertisement perfectly. She has been called by God, and she has been called by her congregation. She is willing to learn, grow, and minister to others. One last thing: this friend has made a life commitment to a partner who happens to be a woman. This commitment does not change all the ways this woman fits your call. Can we as a denomination afford to lose her gifts? Who are we to say that her call from God, carefully discerned, cannot be honored in this denomination?

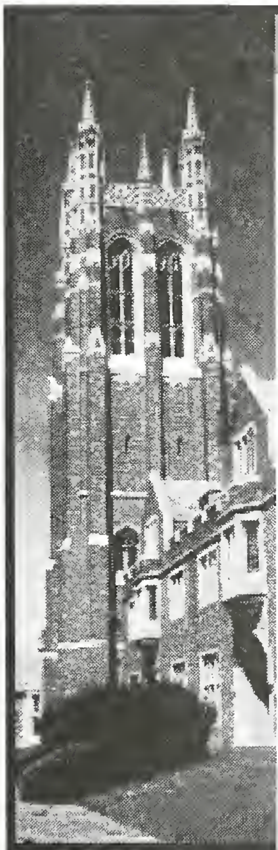
Ineke Way
St. Louis, Mo.

Love the unlovable

In response to the letter from the Berkey Church of the Brethren deacon board in April's Messenger, I would simply like to point out the last *new* commandment that Jesus gave at the Last Supper: "Love one another."

He does not stipulate that we love only those who we feel deserve it. He meant for us to love even the "unlovable"—the dirty, the poor, the homeless, the sick, the homosexual. I say, let God be the judge. And I feel that he will judge harshly those who judge harshly.

As a Sunday school teacher of children in grades 3 through 5, I feel strongly about these issues. What about the children in your own



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church family? When they reach the age of maturity, will you shun them if they are homosexual? Will they drift away, knowing their church family no longer loves them? What would Jesus do? I believe he would reach out to them in love.

Katie Bryant
Live Oak Church of the Brethren
Live Oak, Calif.

Deacons invited to Dancing

We read with interest and disappointment the letter from the deacon board of Berkey Church of the Brethren in Windber, Pa. Interest because they noticed the article in MESSENGER about the Wade On In conference last June; disappointment that a deacon board could be so anti-Christian.

The deacon board felt MESSENGER should not have carried the article. However, more than 200 Church of the Brethren congregants attended this conference, independent of any obligations to Annual Conference or the General Board. Such a large gathering is surely of interest to the Church of the Brethren. This letter is to say thank you to MESSENGER for reporting on a significant event in the spiritual lives of members of the Church of the Brethren.

Finally if members of the deacon board at Berkey Church would like to know firsthand what they are talking about, we invite them to Wichita, Kan., for Dancing in the Southwind, July 24-26. We would welcome those brothers and sisters as Christ has welcomed us.

Patrick O. Fiegenbaum
Eileen M. Wilson
Peace Church of the Brethren
Portland, Ore.

Global warming scam

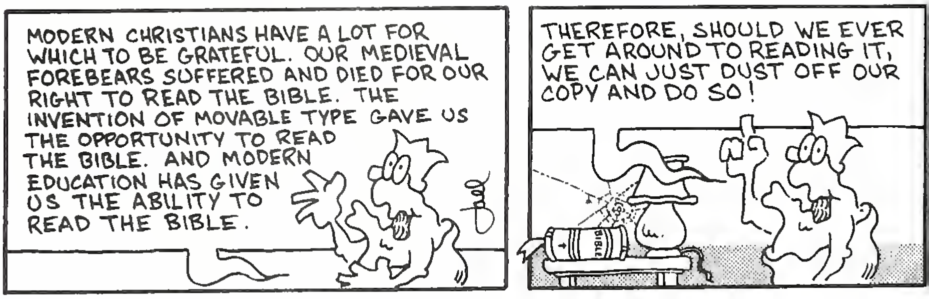
It is discouraging to see the Brethren leadership wasting resources of time, thought, and energy on a "Chicken Little" support of the global warming scam. The minuscule evidence for global warming is easily balanced by evidence of global cooling, and both ideas fade in the light of past temperature fluctuation history. The scientist who was first successful in alerting us to the threat of global warming later reversed himself and said his calculations were in error and global cooling was more likely to occur. It was predicted that in a relatively few years, corn could not be grown as far north as Minnesota.

Instead of a much-ado-about-nothing involvement, why not invest our resources in combating the very real pollution of sex and violence that is destroying families and smothering the minds and souls of our replacement generation?

Virgil Rose
Brethren, Mich.

Send payment for reprinting "Pontius' Puddle" from MESSENGER to Joel Kauffmann, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN 46526. $25 for one time use. $10 for second strip in same issue. $10 for congregations.

Pontius' Puddle


MODERN CHRISTIANS HAVE A LOT FOR WHICH TO BE GRATEFUL. OUR MEDIEVAL FOREBEARS SUFFERED AND DIED FOR OUR RIGHT TO READ THE BIBLE. THE INVENTION OF MOVABLE TYPE GAVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THE BIBLE. AND MODERN EDUCATION HAS GIVEN US THE ABILITY TO READ THE BIBLE.
THEREFORE, SHOULD WE EVER GET AROUND TO READING IT, WE CAN JUST DUST OFF OUR COPY AND DO SO!
BIBLE

esus in disguise

ditor's note: The writer explains at she wrote the following on her oughts after reading in a newspaper bout a person sentenced to ten years prison.]

Mother Teresa once commented, When you see each person as Jesus disguise, this work is beautiful and ttractive because it fills the heart ith great joy and great love." Our rayer must be to not only view each erson as God views him, but to ctually be able to see that person as sus in disguise. If we could view e unlovable as a disguised Jesus, we would love them, forgive them, and minister healing to them. We would not be fearful of connecting with that person.

The imprint of God is marked on every person. It may be buried beneath layers of dirt, but it is there. It is up to us, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to uncover that rare and precious treasure. What is at stake is the eternal life of a human soul—one that bears the imprint of our Father.

Cathy L. Neubauer
Licensed minister
Winfield, Md.

Victory without vulnerability

We are in a period of travail. As someone has said, "We read the Gospel as if we have no money, and we spend as if we know no Gospel."

We have celebrated Christ's "victory through vulnerability" that it too soon becomes "victory without vulnerability." The cross so easily casts a shadow reminiscent of the Crusaders.

Do we press too vigorously for "by right"? What about "He that would save his life shall lose it" (*John 12:25*)?

Kurtis Friend Naylor
McPherson, Kan.

VOLUNTEER
OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer opportunities abound for the New Windsor **Conference Center** located at the lovely, historic Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. The Center is in a peaceful, rural, treed setting with the theme of "A quiet place to get things done," but is also convenient to Baltimore & Washington, D.C., for ease of travel & sightseeing opportunities. We need volunteer hostesses/hosts to help coordinate/provide hospitality & conference services to a variety of guests. Maturity & detail orientation needed along with outgoing personality & genuine interest in providing excellent customer service. Furnished apartment & meals provided during period of service. For more info., call or write Hospitality Coordinator, Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776-0188. (800) 766-1553 (toll-free).

Please note: this ad originated by, and partially funded, through the generous caring of a current volunteer hostess and host.

Make plans now to attend the

MESSENGER DINNER

at Annual Conference

Sights, sounds, & stories from southern Sudan

July 2, 1998, Orlando, Florida

David R. Radcliff, director of Brethren Witness, delivers a multimedia report from the recent delegation visit to Sudan. Learn about the inspiring faith of Sudanese Christians and the new Brethren efforts to build a Partnership for Peace.

For dinner tickets, call the Annual Conference office at (800) 323-8039 or order from advance packet order form. Tickets also available in Orlando at Annual Conference ticket sales.

DIABETICS SERVICE

Diabetics If you have Medicare or insurance, you could be eligible to receive your diabetic supplies at no cost. (Insulin-dependent only.) Call (800) 337-4144.

WANTED

News photographers to cover Annual Conference for Messenger. Reply to Messenger, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or e-mail fffarrar@midwest.net.

CONFERENCES

A Cup of Cold Water: Church Services for the World. June 18–20, 1998. An interdisciplinary conference sponsored by the Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups at Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA. Speakers include representatives from the Brethren, Friends, and Mennonite traditions. There will be a special celebration honoring 50 years of Brethren Volunteer Service. Contact: The Young Center, (717)361-1470 or youngctr@acad.etown.edu.

INVITATIONS

Cincinnati Church of the Brethren fellowship meets for workshop & support in n.e. area of Cincinnati. We welcome others to join us or bring needs to our attention. Contact us c/o Cincinnati Friends Meeting House, 8075 Keller Rd., Indian Hill, OH 45243. Tel. (513) 956-7733.

Come worship in the Valley of the Sun with Community Church of the Brethren at 111 N. Sunvalley Blvd., Mesa, AZ 86207. Mail to: 8343 E. Emelita Ave., Mesa, AZ 85208. Tel. (602) 357-9811.

Worship with Good Shepherd Church of the Brethren, Springfield, MO (in the heart of the Ozarks, 35 miles from Branson). Address: 1624 East Blaine. 1 1/2 blocks west of Glenstone, business 65, corner of Glenstone and Blaine. Sunday school meets 9:30 am. Worship 10:40am. Look for us in the Mennonite Your Way Catalog as a camping facility. For more information call the church office: (417)865-3104 or Pastor Lorene Moore, (417)862-5491.

Salisbury Community Church of the Brethren, a new and growing fellowship in Salisbury, MD. invites Brethren moving into or vacationing in the Salisbury, Ocean City, MD. area to worship with us. We are willing to provide moving assistance (unloading, child care, area info.) to persons moving into the area. For info. contact: Salisbury CoB, P.O. Box 2001, Salisbury, MD. 21802. Tel. (410) 219-5949 or e-mail NRCain@aol.com

TRAVEL

Visiting Japan? Why not stay at World Friendship Center in Hiroshima! Non-profit bed & breakfast staffed by BVS couple. Located within walking distance to Peace Park. Traditional Japanese style house. Very reasonable rates. Survivor stories and park guides available. For more info., call/fax Larry or Alice Petry (330)733-2879, or contact WFC directly at: 8-10 Higashi Kanon-Machi, Nishi-ku, Hiroshima, Japan 733. Tel. 011-81-082-503-3191. Fax 011-81-082-503-3179.

Oberammergau Passion Play and tour of Europe in 2000. One tour (July 31–Aug. 27) is completely filled. Reservations now being accepted for June 26–July 17 and July 17–31, 2000 tours. Tours will include Paris, the Swiss Alps, Venice, Vienna, Prague, Berlin, Schwarzenau, and many other places. For info., write J. Kenneth Kreider, 1300 Sheaffer Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022.

Oberammergau Passion Play year 2000. Bohrer tours will be leading three tours to Europe and the passion play during the year 2000. (May, July and September) Prices will begin at $2099.00. For information write: Wendell and Joan Bohrer, 5067 Royal Meadow Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46217 (317)882-5067) Bradley and Bonnie Bohrer, 283 Parkway Drive, Berea, OH 44017 or Matthew and Noelle Bohrer, 1860 Joseph Court, Elgin, IL (847)697-2746.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Director of Pastoral Care. Bridgewater Retirement Community is looking for a full-time Director of Pastoral Care. Applicants must have knowledge of, and appreciation for, Church of the Brethren beliefs, practices, and traditions. A Master of Divinity or similar degree, Clinical Pastoral Education, and five or more years in pastoral ministry (or equivalent experience) are required. Duties include weekly worship services, officiating at funeral and memorial services, and spiritual growth activities for residents. Applicants should care about older adults and be able to minister to residents with varied faith traditions. Bridgewater Retirement Community offers a variety of senior housing options on a lovely 46-acre campus in the Blu Ridge Mountains. Located in a historic village in th beautiful Shenandoah Valley, Bridgewater is only a tw hour drive from Washington, D.C. and Richmond Virginia. If you are interested in this position, pleas contact Phil Flory at (540)828-2531 or (800)419-9127

Campus Pastor. Job Description: The Campus Pasto is responsible for planning, supervising and providin leadership in areas of spiritual development, campu ministry and Christian faith. She/he is pastoral and per sonal counselor to students and other members of th college community. The Pastor coordinates worshi programs: advises the college on matters of spiritua development of students, and serves on committees organizations and boards related to the religious lif program of the college. Qualifications: Candidates mus identify with and be committed to the traditions of th Church of the Brethren. It is expected that the Campu pastor is, or will be, ordained in the Church of th Brethren. A Master of Divinity degree or its equivalen and experience and demonstrated proficiency in pastoral and personal counseling is required. Ability t provide leadership and support for persons of all faiths and a lifestyle consistent with the policies and traditions of Manchester College are also necessary. I addition, strong academic preparation in theological/Bible studies, Clinical Pastoral Education, an counseling is desirable. Experience as a student or sta member at a church-related independent college, and/o pastoral experience is helpful. Salary: Salary dependent upon qualifications and experience, 10 mont continuing contract. Employment Benefits: Grou insurance covering hospitalization, major medical, surgical, life, accidental death, total disability; TIA retirement; tuition discounts for dependents, and othe benefits. Starting Date: On or before August 17, 1998 Application Process: Letters of application should b accompanied by a complete resume listing training experience and a summary of academic preparation Materials should be received as soon as possible. screening committee will begin reviewing application mid-May. The position will remain open until a suc cessful candidate is chosen. Forward applicatio information to: Vicky Eisenhut, Vice President of Huma Resources, Manchester College, North Manchester, I 46962. Manchester College is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

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ON TAPE

MESSENGER is available on tape for people who are visually impaired.
Each double cassette issue contains all articles, letters, and the editorial.

MESSENGER-on-Tape, is a service of volunteers for the Church and Persons with Disabilities Network (CPDN), a task group of the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC).

Recommended donation is $10 (if you return the tapes to be recycled) or $25 (if you keep the tapes.)

To receive MESSENGER-on-Tape, please send your name, address, phone number, and check payable to ABC to:
Association of Brethren Caregivers, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120

Turning Points

New Members

Note: Congregations are asked to submit only the names of actual new members of the denomination. Do not include names of people who have merely transferred their membership from another Church of the Brethren congregation.

gape, Fort Wayne, Ind.: JoDean Rhoades
mwell, Flemington, N.J.: Erik Frankevich, Kathy O'Neal, Brandt Kiskurno
ntioch, Rocky Mount, Va.: Heather Shepherd, Stephen Crouse, Lewis Green, Mary Green
ear Creek, Accident, Md.: Adam Younkin, Vicki Schlosnagle, Angie Rush, Rox Ann Wooden
eaverton, Mich.:Kris Ranes McKimmy, Ardis Larkin
radford, Ohio: Jennie Clark, Brenda Hinkle, Scott Hinkle, Rosemary Wood, Stacy Baker, Mike Harmon, Kendra Hess, Kisha Jone, Craig "J.R." Norris, Ruby Smith, Lyn Trissell, Rudy Trissell, Rosemary Wood, Angie Baker, Deanna Baker, Michelle Baker
ridgewater, Va.: Doris D. Boyne, Kim Merrick, Jean Petre, Clarence and Mary Quay, Marguerite K. Smith
edar Creek, Garrett, Ind.: Joshua Crain
oventry, Pottstown, Pa.: Kim and Kevin Darlington, Timothy Egalf, Andrew High, Lydia Johnson, Adam Messner, Mark Moran, Brian Wade
phrata, Pa.: Ruth Coil, Jeffrey Wolf, Nikol Peterman
versole, New Lebanon, Ohio: Patti Zimmer, Dustin Zimmer
irst, Reading, Pa.: John and Michelle Alexander, Carl and Linda Kaucher
irst Central, Kansas City, Kan.: Robert and Pauline Frank, Tawny Magee
irst, Harrisburg, Pa.: Wendy Barrick, B.J. Barrick, Daryn Bullock, Ethel Bullock, Waverly Chadwick, Mary Ann Coffman, Shyla Hampton, Kenny Horst, Shirley Kiefer, Fred Lamar, Tim Long, Guillermo Olivencia, Maricel Olivencia, Lisa Rhoades, Johnny Saft, Alfred Williams
Geiger, Friedens, Pa.: Christopher Haines, Charles Shepley, Daniel Walker, Andrew Ritenour, John Ritenour, Sherri Ritenour, Michael Miller, Shirley Miller, Eva Lape
Good Shepherd, Springfield, Mo: Calvin Hlavaty, Bryan Lucore, Danielle Lucore
Greensburg, Pa.: Luke Faust, Matthew Felker, Catherine Spicher, Ronald Spicher, James Rnald Spisso, Stephanie Struzzi, Joshua Taylor, James Wheeler, Barbara Spisso
Hollidaysburg, Pa.: Dan and Heidi McCready, John and Carol Miller, Nicole Brown Frank, Heather Claycomb, Bobby Stahl, Kele Stuver-Pacheco, Charles and Karen Brown, Michele Eastburn
Hurricane Creek, Smithboro, Ill.: Bobbie Patterson
Kokomo, Ind.: Dallas Garrett, Tim and Susan Swisher
Maple Spring, Holsopple, Pa.: Michael and Sharon Toth
McPherson, Kan.: Elijah Gehring, Kyle Gilbert, Ryan Goering, Scott Hammarlund, Timothy Lolling, Mike Goering
Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Mable Smith, Linda Wevodav, Sharon Clark, Terri Martin, Heather Martin, Joseph McCorkel, Shane McCorkel, Amanda Crouse, Shane Kumler, Colin Scott
Mountville, Pa.: Margaret Longenecker, Ken Myers, Mary Myers
Mt. Morris, Ill.: Myrna Stouffer
New Carlisle, Ohio: Brian White, Amanda Slattery, Laura Spotts, Julie Taylor
New Covenant Fellowship, Gotha, Fla.:Jan Daniels, Drew Daniels, Christopher Oltman, Jodi Eller
Nokesville, Va.:John David Bowser, Laura Beth Bowser, Jeremy Hall, Rusty Hall, Jennie Haywood, Amanda Beth Murphy, David Robert Murphy, Katherine Millicent Murphy, Kayla Renee Hill, Rashad DeJuan Bland, Lynn Renee Messenger, Matthew Arrott Truschel, Benjamin Lee Truschel, Vernon Funkhouser, Jeannette Funkhouser, David Moore, Stephanie Moore, Paula Rusher, George Rusher, Margaret Manuel, Kevin Delano Gough, Kimberly Margaret Gough, Kristopher Dean Gough, Kraig Delano Gough, Kory Dustin Gough, Jacqueline Gayle Bear, Brittany Jeannette Thrift
Parker Ford, Pa.: Bonnie Cameron, Christina Ewing, Paul Russell
Parsons, Kan.: Chris Davis, Krista and Jayson Warstler, Everett and Winnie Griffin, Misty Davis
Roaring Spring, Pa.: Kenneth Brumbaugh, Sarah Hall, Natalie Hershberger, Nathan Hershberger, Zachary Miller, Jordan Rhodes, Carli Rinker, Kayci Russell, Carrie Saylor, Matthew Witkovsky
Sebring, Fla.: John and Amanda Sgro

Wedding Anniversaries

Barkley, Meredith and Minnie, Davidsville, Pa., 55
Funkhouser, Cecil and Sylvia Midland, Va., 60
DeBolt, Chris and Erma Uniontown, Pa., 55 years
Shroyer, Dale and Florence New Carlisle, Ohio, 55
Seltzer, Harry and Claudia, Reading, Pa., 55 years

Deaths

Alexander, Velme, 86, Haxtun, Colo., Nov. 22
Allen, Lola, 98, Mt. Morris, Ill. Nov. 23
Bechtold, Jay, 91, Mt. Morris, Ill., March 11
Becker, Richard E. 61, York County, Pa., April 4
Booth, Elwyn, San Diego, Calif., Feb. 10
Bowman, Clarence, 94, Bridgewater, Va., April 19
Brumbaugh, Berdella, 93, Canton, Ohio, March 31
Burkholder, Alden H., 93, Mentor, Ohio, Nov. 10, 1997
Burkholder, Mary E., 91, Mentor, Ohio, Aug. 30, 1997
Cessna, Vera P. 90, New Oxford, Pa., April 2
Churchill, Irvin, 85, Champion, Pa., March 27
Coffman, Marie E., 72, North English, Iowa, March 19
Courtney, Charles, Reading, Pa., Feb. 3
Dell, Mercelle, 74, Goldendale, Wash., March 10
Dove, Arnold, 76, Fredericksburg, Pa.
Edwards, Ethelyn, 77, Haxtun, Colo., Jan. 26
Emig, William Sr., 65, Abbottstown, Pa., April 4
Evans, Willard, 79, Hartville, Ohio, March 24
Favorite, Russell H., 51, New Carlisle, Ohio, Feb. 12
Fisher, Pauline, 81, Boones Mill, Va., Feb. 11
Foltz, Violet, 75, Ephrata, Pa., March 27
Gibson, Agatha, 79, Fort Wayne, Ind., March 28
Greene, Paul, 89, Mt. Morris, Ill., Feb. 10
Harnage, Bertha C., 87, Sebring, Fla., April 25
Hawkey, Alberta T., 65, Sebring, Fla., April 12
Hite, Ralph, 86, Enid, Okla., June 29, 1997
Hoffeditz, Beulah Vought Bridgewater, Va., March 8
Holsopple, Alice, 91, Indiana, Pa., April 6
Hoover, Thomas D., 56, Sebring, Fla., Feb. 24
Hoover, Ethel E., 89, Sebring, Fla., March 24
Hummer, Emmett, 83, Parsons, Kan., Oct. 19
Keeney, Paul W., 81, Loganville, Pa., April 2
Keiper, Pauline, 89, Martinsburg, Pa., March 19
Keiper, Alma N., 101, Martinsburg, Pa., March 23
Kuykendall, Amelda, 87, Fort Seybert, W. Va., March 30
Ladage, Ruth, 86, Parsons, Kan., Jan. 18
Larson, Harold, 76, Yuba City, Calif., Feb. 26
Lindeman, Margaret Eunice, 86, Waterloo, Iowa, March 25
Lortie, Peggye, 50, Garrett, Ind., Feb. 24
Lucore, Eula Wolfe, 72, San Marcos, Calif., Dec. 6
McKimmy, Howard, 67, Beaverton, Mich., Feb. 7
Michaelis, Dorothy, 80, McPherson, Kan., April 14
Moore, Akin, 86, Fort Wayne, Ind., April 2
Myers, Lewis Edward, 91, Bealeton, Va., March 27
Nissly, Jeffrey, 31, Conestoga, Pa., Jan. 19
Nunn, Bessie, 95, Amboy, Ill., March 1
Putnam, Ruth I Foust, 82, New Oxford, Pa., March 30
Rutledge, Bessie, 105, Decatur, Ill., Jan. 24
Schenk, Homer, 78, Huntertown, Ind., Feb. 29
Seveir, Wilbur J., 92, Franklin, W. Va., March 11
Shockey, Charles Grant, Sr., 76, Decatur, Ill.
Steinmetz, Clyde, 90, Lancaster, Pa., Jan. 20
Stover, Catharine, 86, Waynesboro, Pa., April 1
Stroble, Joan S., 63, Harrisonburg, Va., March 30
Studebaker, Ruth Workman, 81, New Carlisle, Ohio, March 14
Swihart, Wilma, Hart, Mich., April 12
Williar, Alton A. T. Sr., 85, Walkersville, Md., April 8

Pastoral Placements

Bain, Paris "Pete," from Red Hill, Roanoke, Va., to Jeters Chapel, Vinton, Va.
Miller, David W., from Bethany Theological Seminary to West Richmond, Richmond, Va.
Thompson, Johnny L., from interim to pastor at Henry Fork, Rocky Mount, Va.

Licensings

Bailey, Patrick, March 14, Owl Creek, N. Ohio
Bennett, Melissa, Prairie City, N. Plains, March 22
Carlson, Melinda K., March 4, West York, S. Pa.
Gates, Ginger M., March 31, Brownsville, Mid-Atlantic
Grogg, Timothy, March 14, Owl Creek, N. Ohio
Lindley, Kyle, Feb. 7, Salkum, Ore./Wash.
Lowry, William (Brett), March 31, Brownsville, Mid-Atlantic
Mason, Carol, Feb. 7, Lacey, Ore./Wash.
Rummel, Robert L., Feb. 22, Maple Spring, W. Pa.
Sweetman, Don, Salkum, Ore./Wash.
Zurin, Jen, Sept. 2, Hempfield, Atlantic NE

Ordinations

Bartholomew, Paul, March 14, Mohican, N. Ohio
Routh, Joe, March 14, E. Chippewa, N. Ohio

Editorial

Then what?

During public radio pledge week I switched to a country station, where a new song by Clay Walker said what I'd been thinking. It's called "Then What?":

"I got a good friend who's got a good life/He's got two pretty children and a real nice wife/Yet he never seems quite satisfied/I said I know what's on your mind/But you better think about it before you cross that line/The grass ain't always greener on the other side."

Christians may think it goes without saying that our personal conduct should be righteous to be pleasing to God. But perhaps it has gone without saying too long. I'm bothered by fooling around in the White House, but I'm bothered more by polls showing that most of the American people aren't bothered by it. The attitude seems to be that as long as the economy is good and we aren't at war what the President does in the privacy of the Oval Office is his own business. I'm for privacy and tolerance, and I'm not sure this is a legal issue. But before the American people acquiesce to lower standards of acceptable behavior for public officials, let's have a word for personal ethics and integrity.

"Then what?/What you gonna do/When the new wears off and the old shines through/And it ain't really love and it ain't really lust/And you ain't anybody anybody's gonna trust.

In 1966 Annual Conference adopted a statement on "The Theological Basis of Personal Ethics." That statement clarifies that we should be good not because it's the law but because of love. "The gospel is not a new code of conduct. Legalism looks to a law or principle to find the specific requirements of God in a particular situation, but love supersedes the most exacting legal description of an act. Love will not steal or kill or commit adultery."

Cheating hurts people. Marital infidelity is a painful form of domestic violence. And don't think certain families are immune. In the movie *Primary Colors* there is a heart-rending scene in which Emma Thompson, who plays the presidential candidate's wife, sobs uncontrollably on the floor upon learning that her husband has bedded a young girl. Even in high places, it hurts.

Do what you want, do what you wish/It's your life but remember this/There's bound to be some consequences/For sneakin' under other fences.

We're not perfect, and we all pray with the psalmist, "Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions" (*Psa. 25:7*). Even so, while acknowledging God's mercy, we can keep trying, and speak up for the value of integrity. "Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right, and speak the truth from their heart. . . . Those who do these things shall never be moved" (*Psa. 15*).

If the Washington scandal were just about one man's marriage, the poll respondents would be right that it's none of the nation's business. But ethics doesn't stop at the door to the White House private apartment. From the Annual Conference statement: "Jesus' summary of personal ethics is that 'you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,' and "you shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The twofold commandment makes brilliantly clear that love of God always entails love of neighbor; personal ethics always involve social ethics."

The connection between personal and social isn't always obvious, but here's one example. A person with nothing to hide can lead boldly for the social welfare, without fear that adversaries will drag out skeletons to stop him. It seems no coincidence that during President Clinton's first term, health care reform and Whitewater heated up together, and faded together. The nation was deprived of substantial benefit because its leader, under investigation, lacked the political power to get the job done. The church also has been deprived at times when would-be leaders are silenced by ethical skeletons.

Social progress requires trust. My father's best friend had a saying that became his motto, "I will if I say I will." It was humorous because he used it in every instance. Are you coming to the party? "I will if I say I will." We enjoyed this memory at his recent funeral. This good man achieved much in his life, and was able to help many people, because he kept his word. Our church will be stronger if it has more people we can count on to do what they say they are going to do.

A trusted leader can do a lot of good even without holding office. Jimmy Carter, known for his strong marriage and sometimes painful honesty, in his retirement is effectively building houses and building peace. Lesser leaders will retire young to face thirty years on the golf course because nobody trusts them anymore.

What is lost with a decline of personal integrity goes beyond the loss of effectiveness in politics. As a people we lose our self-esteem, our nobility, our willingness to stand together and with God against injustice. If we figure everybody is out for themselves we stop trying.

"Then what?/Where you gonna turn/When you can't turn back for the bridges you've burned/And fate can't wait to kick you in the butt/Then what? Oh then what?"

But if we try to be good, God will bless a virtuous people. We can take risks together because we trust each other and God trusts us.—Fletcher Farrar

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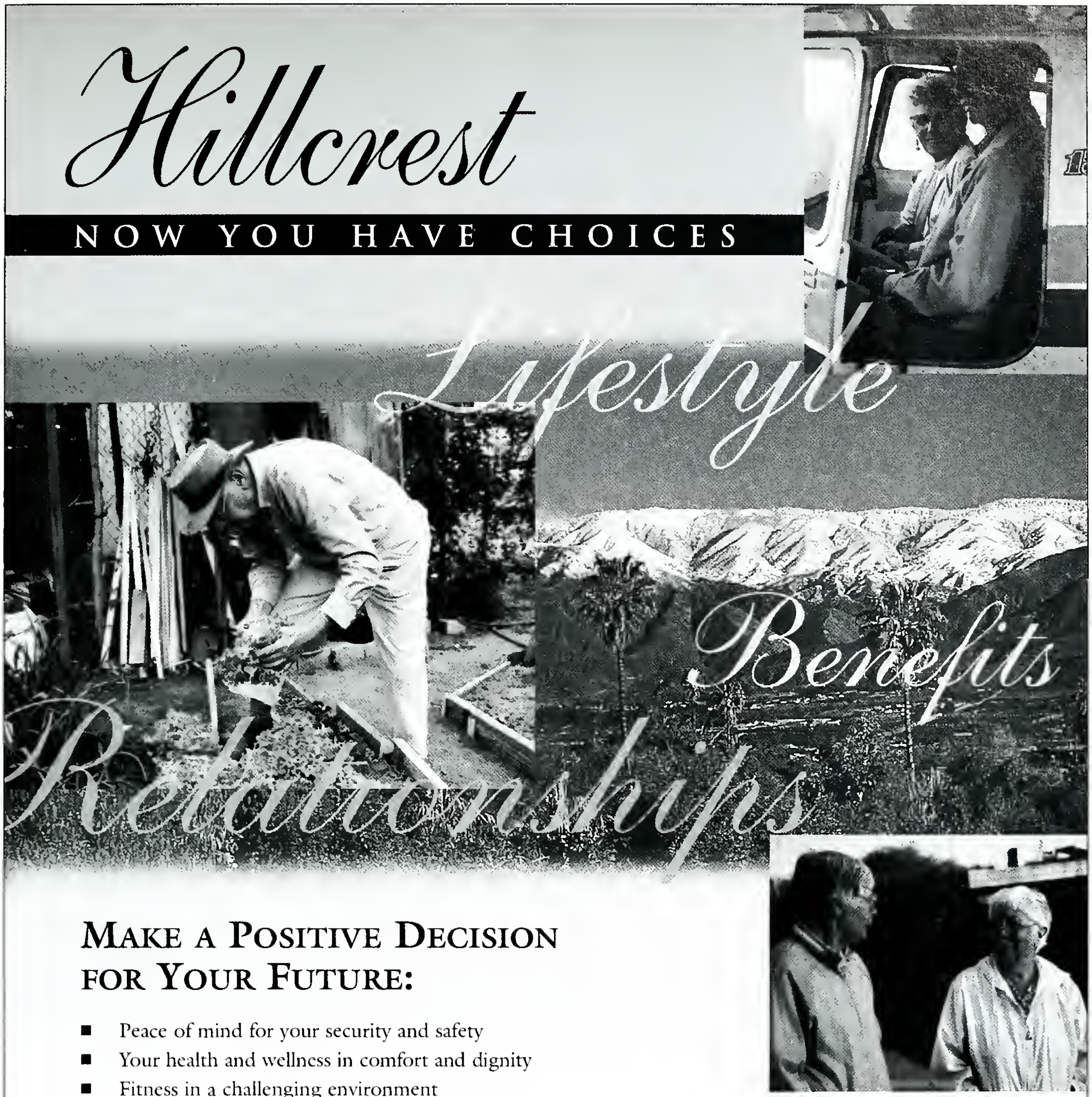

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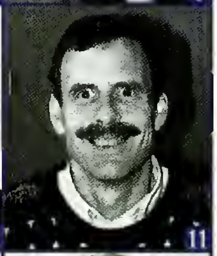
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An effective congregation, in Brethren terms, is determined not by status, influence, or numbers. Rather, congregational faithfulness comes in living as a reconciled and redeemed community, an instrument of God's vision.

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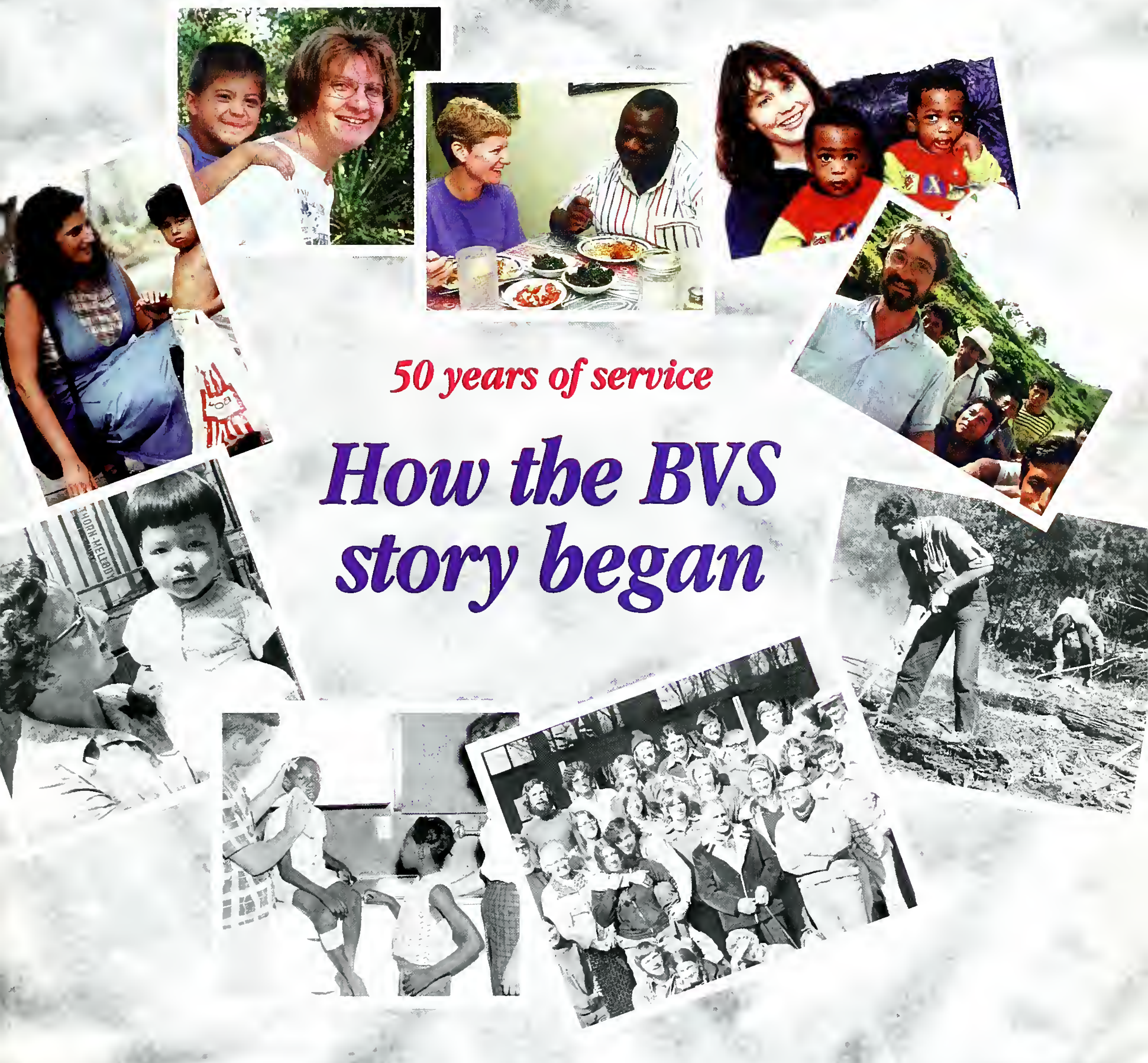
Church of the Brethren July 1998 www.brethren.org

Messenger



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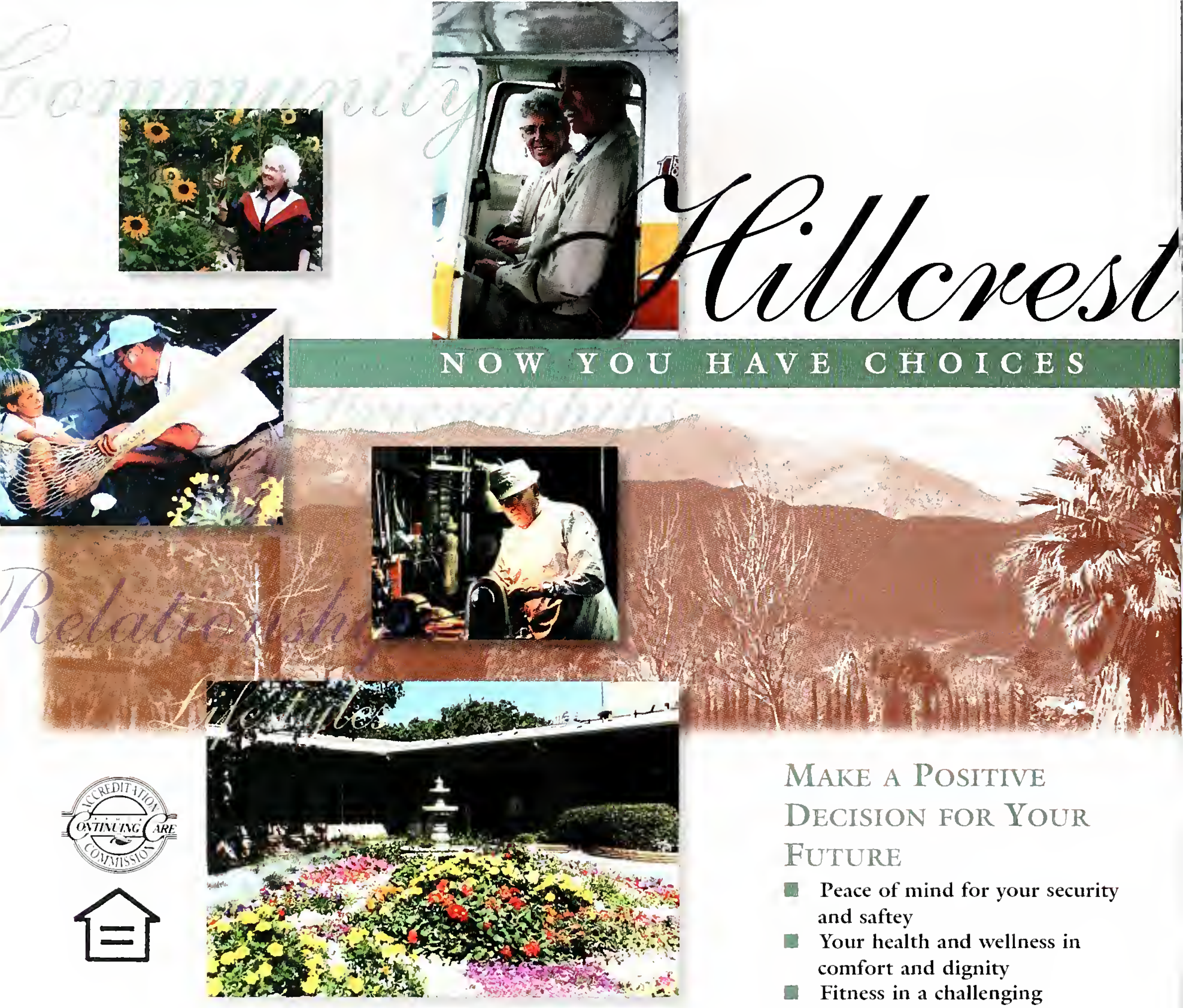
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Messenger

Vol. 147, No. 6 July 1998 www.brethren.org

Editor: Fletcher Farrar
News: Nevin Dulabaum
Subscriptions: Vicki Roche
Publisher: Wendy McFadden
Designer: Marianne Sackett

On the cover: Brethren Volunteer Service celebrates 50 years of faith in action by remembering the past and rededicating its energies to help in a needy world. In its history BVS has placed more than 5,000 volunteers in projects in the US and all over the world.

Cover photos courtesy of Jeff Leard, Cheri Rieman, Brethren Historical Library and Archives. Design by Marianne Sackett and David Van Delinder

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Gail Long

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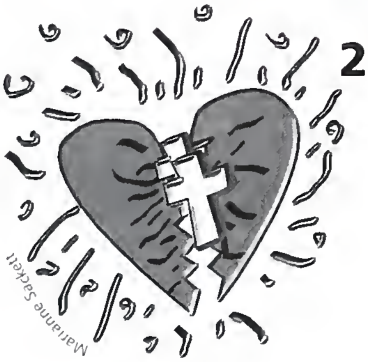

Marianne Sackett

Features

11 Cleaver's Christian connection
Radical activist Eldridge Cleaver found Christ in his later years, and found a spiritual home on the campus of University of La Verne, where he taught and studied before his death earlier this year.

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Youth, prayer, and history came together with the Holy Spirit at the 1948 Annual Conference in Colorado Springs, where young Ted Chambers stood on an orange crate and made the motion that would create Brethren Volunteer Service and change the world.

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23 Pluralism isn't everything
Dale Aukerman, veteran churchman and peace activist, argues here that loving acceptance of diverging viewpoints is all right to a point. But on certain points there can be no compromise. The author outlines the principles on which he stops accepting and takes a stand.

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From the Publisher

I learned two new words recently. They are "aboutness" and "isness." It was *Christian Century* editor James Wall who passed them along to a gathering of Mennonite and Brethren communicators. A film aficionado, he described two contrasting characteristics of film—what a film is *about* and what it *is*.

Aboutness has to do with literalness. It has to do with facts, but not the meaning behind the facts. For example, *Titanic* is about an ocean liner that sinks after hitting an iceberg.

Isness is the vision of life that the filmmaker is conveying. A film with isness does not fill in all the answers, but rather allows the ideas and images to be completed in the viewer's imagination. Isness allows room for ambiguity. Jim Wall would like to see Christians focusing more on isness.

(Whether *Titanic* has "isness" is a question I'll leave for those who've seen it.)

I was intrigued by these new words and began applying them to more than film. I thought right away about scripture and Bible study. There's no question that those of us who make Brethren curriculum have placed a high priority on introducing users to the Bible text—that we want them to know what the Bible stories are *about*. But we also want users to internalize the story—to explore what the story *is*, and how their life stories interact with the Bible story.

Curriculum with printed answers is easier to teach, but curriculum that asks you to discover the questions is more valuable. Even if it leaves you with ambiguity.

Then I thought of our areas of disagreement within the church. Perhaps we don't hear each other because we are hung up on the arguments the other side is making, not on what really is at issue. Maybe we're uncomfortable with ambiguity.

And then I thought of Dale Aukerman's article (page 23), in which he makes a case against pluralism. He argues that we have not been willing to take clear stands, to distinguish between contending sides and go with right and truth.

He offers guidelines for making those distinctions. Among them: We are to act in love, to be nonjudgmental, to take out the log from our own eye before pointing out the speck in another's, and to be open-minded and willing to listen and change when we confront a brother or sister in accordance with Matthew 18.

There's something classically Brethren about these guidelines. So classic that I wonder whether they won't lead us straight back into ambiguity.

Year after year we try to resolve what things are *about*, but when it comes right down to it we are a relational people who can't escape the ambiguity of our identity. In other words, we care about what we believe, but our behavior seems to show that we care just a bit more about the relationships we have with each other and the way our beliefs in God are lived out.

Does that make us wishy-washy?

Maybe, maybe not.

Wendy McFadden

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eace churches seminary students *tour Sojourners ommunity Center computer lab in Washington, D.C.*

Seminarians work on race issues in capital

The ministry of the historic peace churches was alive and well in March as 21 students and 3 faculty members gathered in Washington, D.C., focusing on race relations and "speaking truth to power."

The students, from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Earlham School of Religion, and Bethany Theological Seminary, discussed the status of race relations with Bill Lann Lee, assistant attorney general of civil rights. Working with staff from denominational offices, the Brethren, Mennonites, and Quakers made their concerns known to legislators and non-governmental organizations, including the National Council of Churches, Sojourners, and Call to Renewal. —DEBORAH MILLER

Ruhl gets honorary Elizabethtown degree

Janice Ruhl of the East Fairview Church of the Brethren, Manheim, Pa., was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters by Elizabethtown (Pa.) College.

"She is a role model for women in business and a living reminder of the college's motto, 'Educate for Service,'" said Theodore Long, president. "She has been a devoted advocate for Elizabethtown College and a loyal keeper of the Church of the Brethren heritage at the college."

Ruhl, a 1954 Elizabethtown graduate, currently serves as president and chief executive officer of Ruhl Insurance, Manheim. She has been a member of the college's board of trustees since 1979. She also serves on the Bethany Theological Seminary Board of Trustees.

Serving meals to Old Order "cousins"

Members of Oakland Church of the Brethren, Gettysburg, Ohio, served meals to the German Baptist Brethren Annual Meeting near Covington, Ohio, this spring. According to Fred Bernhard, Oakland pastor, the "Old Order" meeting is much like the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference— a time for fellowship, worship, and business. Often 4,000 to 7,000 people attend, he said.

During 1881-1883, the members of the historic Brethren movement, who trace their beginnings to 1708 Germany, split in three ways, becoming individual denominations known today as the German Baptist Brethren, the Church of the Brethren and the Brethren Church.

"It's a labor of love on our part to serve our cousins," Berhard commented on the event.

Murray honored by Bridgewater College

"The Fires of Peace" was the title of this year's commencement address at Bridgewater (Va.) College, delivered by Andrew Murray, director of the Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa. Murray was awarded an honorary degree, doctor of humane letters. Murray is a 1964 Bridgewater graduate.

Church builds Habitat house for member

After sponsoring many Habitat for Humanity houses over many years for many people, the Sebring (Fla.) Church of the Brethren in April dedicated a house it had sponsored for one of its own.

The house went to Luz Wilson, a 10-year member of the church. More than three years ago Wilson applied for a Habitat house and began working on other Habitat projects to accumulate the 400 hours she needed to qualify to receive one for herself, her daughter, and her three sons. In January 1997 the church board designated a Luz Wilson Family Habitat House fund. By the end of the year enough donations had been received to pay for the house.

Lafiya weekend focus is on forgiveness

"Forgiveness: Going Against the Tide," a Lafiya emphasis weekend featuring SueZann Bosler and Julie Hostetter, was held last month at Roanoke (Va.) First Church of the Brethren. This second annual Lafiya event by Roanoke First used stories, discussion, worship, and Bible study to examine forgiveness.

Bosler and her father, Bill, former pastor of First Miami (Fla.) Church of the Brethren, were brutally attacked in their home in 1986. Bill died from his wounds and James Campbell, the attacker, received the death penalty.

For about a decade, Bosler worked at trying to get Campbell's sentence commuted to life in prison; that verdict was finally rendered in June 1997 following a hearing in which only Bosler appeared and spoke on Campbell's behalf.

The weekend program included a "ritual of forgiveness."

Peacemaker of the Year award to Kindy

Cliff Kindy of North Manchester, Ind., was named 1998 Peacemaker of the Year in April at the annual

Robert D. Cain, Jr., *president and CEO of The Brethren's Home, with Eunice Steinbrecher, board member, and Wilbur Mullen, former administrator.*

Courtesy of Reffner Studio

Brethren's Home gets award for integrity

The Brethren's Home Retirement Community, Greenville, Ohio, May 15 won the Miami Valley Better Business Bureau's Integrity Eclipse Award. The award is based on demonstrating high ethical standards, promoting truth in advertising, and practicing honest competition.

Materials submitted in support of the nomination noted the Brethren's Home paid off bonds in 1996, nine and a half years earlier than required. The bonds were issued after the home filed for Chapter X reorganization during a period of financial difficulty in 1977.

Since then the retirement community has made a financial turnaround one local banker called "miraculous." At no time has any resident ever been asked to leave The Brethren's Home for reasons of lack of inability to pay.

"Throughout the 14 years of Chapter X proceedings, promises to residents were never broken," said Russ Flora, chair of the board of trustees. The Home, founded in 1902, now provides retirement and health care services to more than 500 residents.

dinner meeting of the Atlantic Northeast District Brethren Peace Fellowship at Brethren Village, Lancaster, Pa.

His citation read in part, "He puts his body where his mouth is — both in dangerous and public ways and quietly in private, personal ways."

Kindy, who for nine years has served on the Christian Peacemaker Teams Steering Commitee, was a member of the first long-term team sent o the refugee camps of Gaza Strip in the Middle East. He also has traveled o Israel and Palestine on several occasions. Kindy and his family have intenionally chosen to keep heir income below the evel at which they would be required to pay war axes. They affirm that simplicity in living is an mportant first step in jusice-building for those of developed countries.

E-town develops ties with Korean church

Last fall for ten weeks members of the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren traveled to the new Korean Grace Christan Church of the Brethren n Upper Darby, Pa., along with teachers named by Donna Steiner and the Atlantic Northeast District, to teach Grace Christian's youth about the Church of the Brethren.

They used English and Korean versions of "To Follow in Jesus' Steps" and the accompanying video series, "Journey in Jesus' Way." Members of Grace Christian traveled to Elizabethtown to share in their first love feast.

This spring members of Grace Christian traveled to Elizabethtown to share in the morning worship. Following worship the Korean youth, assisted by Elizabethtown youth, served the church a noon meal of Korean delicacies. Offerings totaled over $1,400 to help the Grace Christian youth join the Elizabethtown youth to go to National Youth Conference in Fort Collins, Colo.

—Wayne Zunkel

Church anniversary celebrations planned

Germantown Brick Church of the Brethren, Rocky Mount, Va., will celebrate its 150th anniversary Oct. 10 with love feast, and on Oct. 11 with worship, during which all former pastors present will be recognized.

Spring Creek Church of the Brethren, Hershey, Pa., is celebrating its 150th anniversary with events throughout the year. The final event will be a homecoming Sunday on Oct. 25.

Ninth Street Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va., will celebrate its 75th anniversary Sept. 20 with a homecoming Sunday. Featured speaker for the worship service will be Earle W. Fike, Jr.

Williamson Road Church of the Brethren, Roanoke, Va., is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with activities planned for each month. Highlights include a spring choral concert, a homecoming weekend, a cornerstone service, and a performance of the Bridgewater College Chorale.

Veteran pastor celebrates 90th

Dorsey E. Rotruck

Dorsey E. Rotruck celebrated a 90th birthday and a lifetime of memories in April at The Cedars, McPherson, Kan.

Rotruck was a Church of the Brethren pastor for 37 years before his retirement in 1973. More than 90 friends attended the celebration, with surprise visits by former parishioners from Kansas City and Garden City. Rotruck received phone calls from well-wishers in Germany and from throughout the US.

He served pastorates at Purchase Line, Clymer, Pa.; Tire Hill, Pa.; Miami, Fla.; Garden City, Kan.; Denver, Colo.; and Kansas City, Kan. His recent projects include writing his memoirs and building a replica of the Knobley (W. Va.) Church of the Brethren where he attended as a child. He and his wife, Mildred Yoder Rotruck, have 7 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

Eighty years together

On June 14 Harley and Sylvia Utz celebrated their 80th wedding anniversary with a reception at the Pitsburg Church of the Brethren, Arcanum, Ohio, where they have been longtime members.

Both are 99 years old and in good health, according to their son, Emerson Utz, of Arcanum. Since last September they have resided in an independent living apartment at The Brethren's Home, Greenville, Ohio.

Sylvia Utz says at the Home she no longer needs to drive a car, which she did up until last year. Harley Utz, who has been blind for the past 20 years, "reads" 300 non-fiction books a year on tape. He is a former accountant; she was a homemaker.

They have lived in Dayton, Ohio; Rochester, N.Y.; Chicago, Ill.; Arcanum, Ohio; Brookville, Ohio; and California. According to their son, "They both believe in covenants, holding true to their word."

News

COURAGE unites Cameroon and Oklahoma survivors

Their presence together at first seems puzzling: What is the connection between the survivors of the Oklahoma City bombing of 1995 and the survivors of Cameroon's Lake Nyos disaster of 1986, a tragedy in which 1,700 people and 4,000 animals were suffocated when a natural buildup of carbon dioxide was released from beneath the lake?

There was no connection prior to April 1997, but that changed when Heifer Project International and Interfaith Disaster Recovery Center of Oklahoma City sent 14 from Oklahoma to Cameroon for three weeks. From that experience and from a three-week trip by eight Cameroonians to the United States in April, a close bond has been formed out of the firsthand experience of losing loved ones tragically.

Melissa Collett

Members of COURAGE *and Church of the Brethren employees share a moment together in prayer during an April visit to the General Offices. The COURAGE members visited the Brethren facility in honor of the denomination's long-term ties with Heifer Project International.*

In April, members of COURAGE (Cameroon Oklahoma Uniting in Recovery and Growth through Exchange) visited the Church of the Brethren offices in Elgin, Ill., as part of a seven-state storytelling and sightseeing tour. The group included seven Lake Nyos survivors and several Oklahoma City bombing survivors. They were hosted by Merv Keeney, the General Board's director of Global Mission Partnerships.

Their stories are gut-wrenching, yet inspirational, as many have rebuilt their lives and are able to see some good that has come from their ordeals. It is also obvious that members of the two groups have helped each other greatly through listening and compassion, which was the purpose of bringing these two groups together.

From the Cameroonians the Americans have learned that they need to give, not just receive. They also learned to show compassion and love to strangers.

From the Americans the Cameroonians learned to talk about their tragedy. In one meeting last year in Cameroon, only the survivors from both tragedies were allowed to participate. For the Cameroonians, it was like a floodgate had been thrown open.

"It was the first time we had sat and talked about the disaster," said Sule Umaru.

As his village's only reader and writer, Sule became acquainted with HPI as it responded to the Lake Nyos tragedy. This connection led him to Massachusetts and an animal science degree. He has since returned to Cameroon to work with Lake Nyos survivors.

Janet Walker, whose husband, David, who had worked on the eighth floor of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, said his death brought her to face to face with her faith. She has become a devout Christian who, with lessons learned from David and the Cameroonians, wants to devote the rest of her life helping others. "I want to be a giver," she said.—NEVIN DULABAUM

Rubbermaid contributes to success of disaster auctions

Thanks in part to the Rubbermaid Corporation, four Church of the

Brethren district disaster auctions raised nearly $300,000 in May for the Church of the Brethren Emergency Disaster Fund.

Special sales of Rubbermaid products have helped increase the totals of several district auctions over the past few years. Surplus commercial-grade items or slightly damaged goods that have not sold have reportedly been written off by the firm and then donated by the truckload.

Mid-Atlantic District's 18th annual Auction, held May 2 at the Westminster, Md., Agriculture Center, raised nearly $50,000. The auction included 16 quilts, 20 comforters, three baby quilts, and two wall hangings. A variety of items, such as baseball card sets, collectable trucks, and Longaberger baskets, were also sold.

Middle Pennsylvania's second annual auction, held May 9 at Morrison's Cove Memorial Park in Martinsburg, Pa., raised over $80,000, with $60,000 of that coming from the sale of 10 semi-trailer trucks of Rubbermaid products. The auction also featured 23 quilts, livestock, and crafts.

Shenandoah District's sixth annual auction, held May 15-16 at Rockingham County Fairgrounds, Harrisonburg, Va., raised about $150,000. This auction raised an estimated $32,000 from livestock and $100,000 from arts, crafts, comforters, and quilts. It, too, raised funds from the sale of Rubbermaid products—since last year the district has received about a dozen truckloads of various commercial-grade products.

The fourth auction, West Marva's, was held May 2 at the Barbour County (W.Va.) Fairgrounds. About 200 people attended the event, which raised about $4,700. Antiques, tools, and toys were among the items sold, as was a butchered cow.

Brethren Homes Forum II focuses on collaboration

New ways of working together was the focus representatives of many Church of the Brethren organizations discussed at the Second Brethren Homes Forum on Collaboration May 1-3. The conference, which included representatives from 18 retirement communities, three districts, Brethren Benefit Trust, Congregational Life Teams of the General Board, and the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC), was held at the New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center.

Sponsored by the Fellowship of Brethren Homes, an ABC ministry group, this year's event was the next step in creating a new model of collaboration for bringing innovative services to participating Brethren retirement communities, said Mary Dulabaum, ABC's communications director. Last year's forum was the first time members of the Fellowship of Brethren Homes and agencies of the Church of the Brethren met to explore collaborative possibilities.

Michael Winer, consultant for the American Association of Homes and Services to the Aging, again served as leader.

Brethren colleges work together to recruit students

Admissions officers of six Brethren colleges are finding new ways to work together rather than compete over potential student recruits. Their efforts are leading to broader collaboration efforts among the colleges, and renewed attention to the Brethren values the colleges share.

"We have more in common than we have in competition," says David McFadden, vice president of enrollment and planning at Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind.

The Church of the Brethren Admissions Group is chaired this year by Brian Hildebrand, dean of enrollment at Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, Va. The group met twice in 1997, and again in January this year. Another meeting is scheduled for November.

Out of those meetings has come a plan to develop a national database of Brethren youth, which will be begun this year from National Youth Conference registrations and supplemented with information solicited from pastors. Enrollment-age youth on the list will be sent a joint publication with information about all the Brethren colleges. The student may then request information from any of the colleges.

The database and joint publication replaces an old system of Brethren college recruiting territories, which gave each of the six colleges exclusive recruiting rights in their geographical area. Though the exclusive territories were formally abandoned a decade ago, they remain in effect in the minds of some church members.

"We have plans in place for collaboration," McFadden said. "Now we have a lot of work to do to get the word out." The joint Brethren colleges promotional brochure is scheduled to be available at Annual Conference this year.

McFadden said that while the six colleges are different from each other, they all offer a high quality of education with good value for the cost. All offer good financial aid packages, he said.

And, while there has not yet been a formal statement of values the colleges hold in common, they all reflect in their programs the core Brethren beliefs of peace, justice, and service, McFadden said. "At every Brethren college these are woven into the fabric of campus life," he said.

"Some colleges tell students the answers," McFadden said. "Other colleges don't bother with the questions. Our colleges help students answer the questions."

All the colleges have agreed to waive their application fee for Brethren students. They plan to advertise jointly and create a joint Web site. And they are funding a joint research project to determine what Brethren families are looking for in higher education.

The member institutions include Manchester; Bridgewater; Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pa. Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa., McPherson College, McPherson, Kan.; University of La Verne, La Verne, Calif.; Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.; and Brethren Colleges Abroad.

Life Teams go to work on working relationships

The General Board's Congregational Life Teams (CLTs) have established formal working relationships with a number of Brethren organizations, most of which had ties with the Parish Ministries Commission before the board's redesign.

A CLT member has been assigned to relate to the Association for the Arts (AACB), the Church of the Brethren Association of Christian Educators (CoBACE), the Ecumenical Center for Stewardship Studies (ECSS), Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM), New Life Ministries, and the Outdoor Ministries Association (OMA).

Communications links have been established with the Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC), the Hispanic Committee, Ministry of Reconciliation, New Church Development, On Earth Peace Assembly (OEPA), Urban/Black Committee, and the Women's Council.

Courtesy Bethany Theological Seminary

Bethany Theological Seminary *awarded degrees to 18 students during its 93rd commencement on May 9. Graduates included, front row, kneeling, left to right: Christen Miller, Tracy Knechel, Laura Van Voorhis, and Jeff Carter. Second row: Shawn Replogle, Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, Sharon Nearhoof, Steven Bollinger, Deborah Miller, James Bowyer, Brenda Petry, and Lisa Hazen. Third row: David Miller, Andrew Wright, Paula Carmichael, Dana Statler, Kevin Derr, and Michael Grubb.*

Eighteen graduates receive Bethany degrees in May

Eighteen students were awarded graduate degrees during the 93rd commencement of Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind.

Thirteen received master of divinity degrees; four received master of arts in theology degrees. One student was awarded a graduate-level certificate of achievement in theological studies. Three individuals have completed a degree with a peace studies emphasis.

Jo Young Switzer, vice president and academic dean at Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind., delivered the keynote address at the worship service.

North Koreans grateful for generous relief donations

An anonymous gift of $53,000 has been given to the Global Food Crisis Fund's $100,000 appeal from October to help combat hunger in North Korea. This money will be forwarded to Church World Service in addition to the $100,000 that was raised by the appeal and sent by the Church of the Brethren General Board two months ago for barley seed and emergency relief.

This gift comes only three weeks after North Korean officials told the National Council of Churches that food supplies have run out and shortages will continue for at least three years.

Kim Su Man, An Song Nam, and Ji Man Bok, three officials of North Korea's Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee, were in the United States earlier this year to thank non-governmental organizations

(NGOs), including the NCC, for their relief aid as well as to report on their country's current situation. The visiting officials stressed that food is still the number one priority, although medicines, livestock and agricultural equipment also are needed.

David Radcliff, director of Brethren Witness for the General Board, announced that the 2,300 child care kits produced by Brethren for North Korean children will be shipped to Asia in late summer. Additional kits may be sent to the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., by Aug. 15.

Board, seminary, districts announce staff changes

Brenda Reish has resigned as controller and assistant treasurer of the Church of the Brethren General Board to begin Aug. 1 as business manager and treasurer of Bethany Theological Seminary. She will be responsible for Bethany's financial operations and budget planning and will supervise an office that provides institutional business and student financial aid services to Bethany and its partner seminary, Earlham School of Religion.

Reish has worked for the General Board since 1984. She holds business administration degrees from Elgin Community College and Manchester College.

Tara Lea Hornbacker, pastor of Pleasant Hill (Ohio) Church of the Brethren since 1989, has been named assistant professor of ministry formation at Bethany Theological Seminary. She has been an adjunct faculty member at Bethany, supervised student ministers-in-training for several institutions, and served as a mentor for licensed ministers in Southern Ohio District.

Hornbacker has degrees from Indiana University and Earlham School of Religion. She is pursuing a doctorate at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Ann Quay, *BBT board vice chair, presents a gag award at the annual BBT board/employee dinner. Don Fecher, pension plan director, looks on.*

Kristi Rittle, of Elgin, Ill., began in May as Conference assistant in the Annual Conference office. A member of the Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren in Elgin, she is a 1998 graduate of Millikin University, Decatur, Ill.

Joan Dagget, of Tryon, N.C., begins July 15 as associate executive of Shenandoah District. She has served as a co-pastor, director of Christian education, and a curriculum writer, and has degrees from Bridgewater College and Bethany Theological Seminary.

Jorge Rivera began June 1 as half-time associate executive for Atlantic Southeast District, serving in Puerto Rico. He is pastor of the Yahuecas Church of the Brethren in Castañer. He has been director of the Theological Institute in Puerto Rico, chair and moderator of the Puerto Rico board, and a member of the General Board.

Eldon Coffman and Esther Norris have been named interim co-executives of Missouri/Arkansas District. A retired pastor, Coffman worked many years at a Navaho Indian school in Utah. He will coordinate pastoral placements and will relate to the Council of District Executives. Norris has served many years in nursing and hospital administration. She will relate to the district's congregations and various commissions.

Religious leaders: Jerusalem should be the City of Peace

This year's 50th anniversary of the creation of Israel is a time for reflection. So wrote 20 US religious leaders to President Clinton on May 12, including Joseph Mason, interim executive director of the Church of the Brethren General Board.

The group states that movement in the Middle East peace process is needed while there's still hope for a peaceful solution. And a large portion of that solution hinges on Jerusalem, which has been subject to war and bitter dispute.

"We are entirely convinced that a resolution of the question of Jerusalem is essential for peace and cooperation among the three Abrahamic faiths," the letter states. "We stand at a point in history where the future of Jerusalem is open to peaceful resolution. As Christians, we join Jews and Muslims in longing for the time when Jerusalem, the spiritual heritage of all the children of Abraham, will truly be the City of Peace for humankind."

"If there is to be universal and wholehearted celebration of the creation of the State of Israel this year, the reality of the dislocation and suffering experienced by the Palestinian people must be acknowledged, and questions of restitution, self-determination (statehood) and a just peace need to be openly addressed and resolved."

Resources and Opportunities

The Brethren World Assembly, scheduled for July 15-18 at Bridgewater College, takes up the theme: "Faith and Family—Challenges and Commitments." Study papers related to the theme will be presented by Ronald Clutter, John Shultz, Brenda Colijn, Nancy Faus, and Alvin Conner. The Wednesday night banquet features a keynote speech by Carl Bowman on "The Impact of Modern Culture on the Brethren Family." The event is sponsored by The Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., and Bridgewater College. For more information call 540-828-6548.

"Dancing in the Southwind: Weaving an Inclusive Spirit" is the theme of the gathering of the Supportive Congregations Network July 24-26 in Wichita, Kan. It is an international gathering of Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations and individuals who seek to welcome gay, lesbian, and bisexual members. Workshops will focus on homosexuality and the Bible, strategies for youth leaders, and the roles of congregational leaders. For more information call the SCN office at 612-722-6906.

The 53rd annual Civilian Public Service reunion will be Aug. 19-20 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pa. The gathering is open to all who served in a CPS camp during World War II. For program and registration form write to Irvin E. Cordell, 57 E. Grandview Ave., Mercersburg, PA 17236. Or call 717-328-2746.

As part of its emphasis on health maintenance, the Brethren Medical Plan staff has found a self-help book that includes the emotional, social, psychological, and spiritual elements of health as well as the more traditional physical considerations. It is *The Healthy Mind, Healthy Body Handbook*, by David Sobel and Robert Ornstein. "Sobel and Ornstein point out that instead of relying on someone else to make you healthy, a person needs to become aware that the essentials for health are within and begin with the way we think about health," said Bruce Rosenberger, pastor of Greenville (Ohio) Church of the Brethren. The book is available from Brethren Press for $14.95 by writing to brethren_press_gb@brethren.org, calling 800-441-3712, or by visiting the Brethren Press booth June 30-July 5 at Annual Conference in Orlando.

News (continued)

Brethren Benefit Trust to expand financial services

At its April meeting, the Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT) board added an international common stock manager and approved items of business that will be presented to Annual Conference delegates this month.

Walden Capital Management of Boston, Mass., has been hired to serve as the fourth manager of the BBT pension plan's common stock fund, reported Darryl Deardorff, chief financial officer. An estimated 15 percent of the common stock fund, which currently is invested in domestic stocks, will be allocated to Walden's socially responsible international common stock index fund, he said. Deardorff added that Walden's president, Geeta Bhide Aiyer, is noted for her leadership in socially responsible investing.

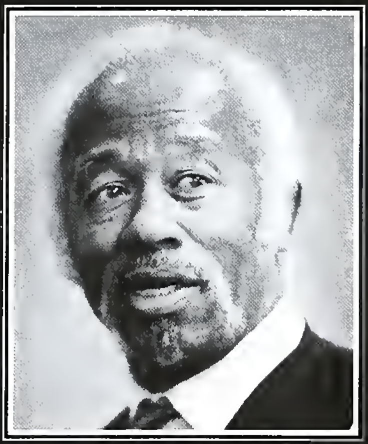
Walden will also serve as manager of a fifth fund choice for BBT's Brethren Foundation Asset Management Service — an international common stock index fund that will be active by July. Foundation clients currently have four fund choices — a domestic common stock fund, a balanced fund, a bond fund, and a short-term fund.

The BBT board will ask Annual Conference delegates to approve revisions to its Articles of Organization and a proposed Church Workers' Assistance Plan.

The Articles of Organization changes would allow BBT to provide services to non-Brethren individuals and organizations that "share the values of the Church of the Brethren," said BBT president Wilfred E. Nolen. He added, however, that "our primary function is to serve the Church of the Brethren."

If the proposal is approved, BBT would then consider offering pension benefit plans, welfare benefit plans, financial assistance programs, legal and tax information, financial management, investment management, and other services.

Annual Conference delegates will also be asked to approve expanding the Retired Church Workers' Fund and renaming it the Church Workers' Assistance Plan. The approval for expansion would enable the fund to provide financial, legal, and tax assistance to active pastors and other church workers who have "extraordinary financial needs."



Eldridge Cleaver 1937-1998

Part of the solution

In the last days of his life, Eldridge Cleaver formed a bond with the University of La Verne and its Brethren values

BY RANDY MILLER

Eldridge Cleaver, consultant to the Coalition for Diversity at the University of La Verne and former minister of information for the Black Panther Party, died May 1 of a heart attack. He was 62.

Cleaver's affiliation with the university began last fall. The author of *Soul on Ice* spent Nov. 17 on campus, speaking to classes and addressing members of the faculty, student body, and the general public. He spoke not only of his years as a Black Panther and his eight years in exile following a gun battle with Oakland, Calif., police officers n the late 1960s, but also of his conversion to Christianty. Some students, unsure of what to expect based on what they had read of his turbulent past, were surprised by what they encountered.

"I thought [the Black Panthers] were a racist group because of the way history had portrayed them," ULV freshman Rachel Eldredge told a reporter for the *Campus Times*, the university's weekly newspaper. "But after hearng Eldridge speak, I began to understand what the Black Panthers were really about."

At the end of the day, Cleaver found himself unexpectedly drawn to the university. The welcome he had received from students and faculty, along with the values and general character of the institution, intrigued him. According to Sharon K. Davis, professor of sociology and criminology, the feeling was mutual. "We liked him and he liked us." Davis and Cleaver, along with other faculty members, began exploring ways a more formal relationship could be established. On Feb. 15, Cleaver began his duties as a consultant.

John Gingrich, dean of arts and humanities at the university, acknowledged that the atmosphere of the campus, with its strong emphasis on community service and its roots in the Church of the Brethren, may have been part of what Cleaver found so appealing the day he spoke.

"The emphasis on service at the university is a part of our curriculum. Our general education program is designed to fulfill the commitments we have in our mission statement. So, with Eldridge Cleaver's interest in service and justice, I can see how he might have been attracted to us."

La Verne's Protestant campus minister, Debbie Roberts of the Church of the Brethren, echoes Gingrich's sentiments. "Our mission statement talks about service, community awareness, and building bridges. This comes from Brethren ideals. And Eldridge Cleaver was very much interested in building bridges. He could meet you on your own turf and help you across your turf to someone else's."

Cleaver, who had participated in the planting of a "peace pole" on campus, phoned Roberts from Portland, Ore., days before his death to tell her he had noticed a miniature peace pole on the desk of a faculty member at a college where he was scheduled to speak.

"People who knew him best saw him as a very wise person," Roberts added. "He was able to be a mentor to students. He had advice for them, yet he was always listening. Some people accused him of selling out [when he became a Christian], but people who knew him didn't feel that. He gave us information we could never have found elsewhere. He was incredibly valuable to ULV."

Cleaver often could be seen sitting with students in the Davenport Dining Hall, or chatting with a small gathering in the Wilson Library, where he had his own cubby and computer.

At a memorial service held on campus, John Gingrich pointed out that Cleaver's influence on the university actually spanned three decades. He told those in attendance that former La Verne College President Leland Newcomer, known for his innovative ideas, was fond of quoting Cleaver's famous phrase, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem."

"He was an elder to the community, and he was warmly received by everyone on campus," said Richard Rose, associate professor of religion and philosophy and diversity consultant, and perhaps Cleaver's closest friend at the university. "We were the last community to claim him as their own. Let the record show that this is where the story of his life, on this side of eternity, ends."

Randy Miller is managing editor of the journal Together, and editor of the MARC Newsletter, both publications of World Vision International. He is an adjunct faculty member at the University of La Verne. He and his family are active members of the La Verne Church of the Brethren.

The spirit that gave birth to BVS

It was an electrifying moment when prayer and history met up with youth and the Holy Spirit at the 1948 Annual Conference.

BVS then

Photos courtesy of Brethren Historical Library and Archives

Alma Moyers (Long) *was the one who approached the moderator, Dr. Calvert N. Ellis, with the young people's motion.*

BY JAMES H. LEHMAN

A small young man with big ideas stood on an orange crate to make a motion that had reached the floor of Annual Conference through a highly unorthodox process allowed by a moderator who usually went by the book.

This dramatic 1948 beginning for BVS, remembered and turned almost into legend, overshadows the fact that Brethren had been volunteering service long before Brethren Volunteer Service began.

Brethren were doing volunteer work as early as the 1930s. In 1942 Annual Conference considered a query from the Council of Boards, the forerunner of the General Brotherhood Board (GBB), stating, "Youth of the church have been serving for a number of years in areas of human need, giving one year of their lives without compensation." The query requested "that Annual Conference approve the principle of volunteer service by members of the church." The terse decision: "Request granted."

This authorization was never acted on. By then World War II was heating up, and suddenly the Brethren Service Committee (BSC) had the huge task of creating placements for hundreds of Brethren young men who were choosing Civilian Public Service (CPS) over military service.

Still, volunteer work went on. At the same time men were going into CPS, Brethren were sending volunteers (men and women) to Castañer, Puerto Rico; the state mental hospital in Elgin, Ill.; the new clothing processing center at New Windsor, Md.; and other projects.

In 1943, BSC already had Brethren in places like England and Spain dealing with war prisoners and beginning relief efforts. This activity accelerated as the war drew to a close and Brethren geared up for the relief and reconstruction they knew would be needed. The

"If you want to get the Brethren interested in the peace movement, you have to get the ideas of the young people out into the churches."

reports of BSC for both 1945 and 1946 detail these efforts and call attention to ongoing volunteer work.

Thus the seeds were planted. The volunteer movement had begun. But it wasn't the church leaders who brought it to fruition. It was the youth.

Annual Conference in 1947 met June 10-15 in Orlando, Fla. M.R. Zigler, the executive secretary of BSC, just back from Europe, spoke to the youth in a football stadium, telling them about the hunger and homelessness, the illness and misery, the devastated land and leveled cities all over Europe. "His [Zigler's] first-hand accounts of the suffering he had seen in Europe shook his hearers," writes Brethren historian Donald Durnbaugh. "His message was electrifying. It shocked the youth into a state of horror. Dismay and soul-searching followed, then the questions, 'What can we do?' The decision was to begin praying and wait for an answer."

The youth cabinet, with Charlotte Weaver (Anderson) as president and Don Snider as national youth director, called a round-the-clock vigil to pray for peace, inviting all youth and all conferencegoers to participate. Plans were to keep it going all through Conference week.

One evening after a BSC session much like today's "insight sessions," some youth and adults lingered to talk, and again the idea of voluntary service came up. Edson Sower, a young man from Ohio, was there, as were M. R. Zigler; Kermit Eby, who was a labor activist, soon to join the University of Chicago faculty; Dan West, GBB staff member and Brethren innovator; and a young woman, also from Ohio, named Alma Moyers (Long), who remembers what Kermit Eby said: "If you want to get the Brethren interested in the peace movement, you have to get the ideas of the young people out into the churches." In Alma's view, that discussion led directly to the activities of the next year and the events at the 1948 Conference.

A lot happened in that summer of 1947. On the train from Conference, somewhere between Orlando and Atlanta, Charlotte Weaver, a young man from California named Gerry Pence, and two other youth decided the prayer vigil was too important to drop. "Let's continue it through the summer," they said. They contacted the Brethren summer camps and assigned various months to different camps. The idea caught fire.

Later in the summer, Charlotte Weaver, Don Snider, and two other youth were sent by the church to an international youth conference in Oslo, Sweden, where they met and listened to 1,400 youth from 80 countries. Afterward, these four traveled all over Europe visiting the places where Brethren were already at work in their relief and rehabilitation efforts. Don Snider remembers zigzagging across international borders 33 times and bringing back a vivid picture of the need and of the Brethren volunteers who were already responding to it.

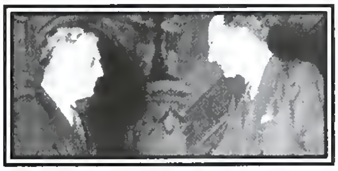
Meanwhile about 40 youth gathered in Salina, Kan., for a workcamp and peace institute. They built a community playground and did a door-to-door survey. They studied the Bible, discussed international problems, studied the history of the peace movement, looked at Jesus' teachings, looked at the post-war needs. They were led by an impressive group of church leaders, among whom were Jack and Arlene Kough, Dan West, and Ed and Helene Crill.

Intended to be a two-week event, it was such a high spiritual adventure that the campers extended it for another two weeks. They were very serious about peace. Edson remembers that his whole reason for going was to push for a volunteer service.

Dan West challenged them to begin by starting peace caravans. The idea caught on: send groups of young people out across the Brotherhood to ask Brethren to think about peace. One of the workcampers remembers hearing Edson Sower say, "Our calling is to make peace. Let's do it!"

Plans were to keep the caravans going for a whole year. Those who could pledged themselves to travel. Other who could not travel pledged themselves to pray and provide money. One Manchester graduate from Ohio, Mary Lou Bowman (Smith), gave up a secure job with a good salary teaching school. In keeping with the ongoing prayer of that summer, the workcampers kept a 24-hour vigil on the banks of a creek, and on the last night they lit candles and floated them downstream to symbolize their commitment.

The first group to hit the road was four men and a woman. Soon others joined. They divided into two groups, traveling mostly in the Midwest and South. They went to a different church each week, staying



Dr. Calvert N. Ellis, moderator, *and Dr. Paul Bowman, moderator-elect and president of Bridgewater College, together at the 1948 Annual Conference.*

"Somehow I knew it was going to happen. It was just like a gift of the Spirit or something."

in the homes of members, helping with the Sunday service if asked, meeting with the youth and any other willing church group. They met with community groups and spoke at high schools. One of the caravaners, Betty Wolfkill (Rogers), who now lives in McPherson, Kan., remembers their self-assurance with some embarrassment. "We young squirts went out and told them what to think. How presuming!" Still, the Brethren received these idealistic and energetic youth with courtesy and appreciation.

Ted Chambers, a Manchester College student from Michigan, missed the workcamp at Salina, but joined that first 1947 caravan, and stayed with it the whole time until the following summer. He remembers they went to Churches of the Brethren in Texas, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma, Indiana, and Illinois. He also remembers they sometimes tried to practice their peacemaking by offering to mediate internal disputes in the host church. In one little congregation where he sensed an internal rift, he gave a speech, invited them to stand up and hold hands, and had them sing together.

During the holidays that winter, the peace caravaners sent Ted to observe the United Nations in action at its headquarters in New York. What he learned in that trip became part of the picture he presented in his peace caravan work. Ted had a gift for communication. He enjoyed the challenge of talking to people who might be less than excited about his peace message.

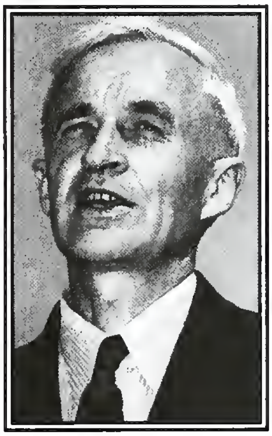
Gerry Pence commented fifty years later, "He could present a program in a way that you'd say, 'Yeah, that's right!' When he visited service clubs (on the peace caravans) he'd say, 'Gentlemen! I'm going to make you mad, but I'm going to make you think.'"

Dr. Calvert N. Ellis, *president of Juniata College and moderator at the 1948 Annual Conference, made an unprecedented decision to ask the delegate body to consider the motion asking for the creation of BVS, even though the motion had not come through Standing Committee.*

The youth came to the 1948 Annual Conference (June 15-20) at Colorado Springs, Colo., with more momentum than anyone realized, even themselves. They had kept their prayer vigil and their peace caravans going all year, and the caravaners were excited about volunteer service. Young leaders from all over the country had met with the National Youth Cabinet in a sort of mini youth conference in Chicago just before heading to Colorado Springs, and they were full of new ideas. After praying and working for peace all year, the youth were saying, "Let's do something! Come on, adults. Get on board."

So they arrived at Conference ready to act. Edson and Ted were there, active, vocal, full of vision. Dan West was there, lobbying in the background. But amazingly, no one came with a plan. No proposal had been sent to Standing Committee. No one came with a prepared motion. Instead, there was all this energy and prayer and talk and activity. When it all came together, something like spontaneous combustion happened.

Each day activities began with an early morning prayer vigil in a local park where the young people would make a circle, hold hands, and pray



Dan West, *General Brotherhood Board staff member and Brethren innovator, played an important role behind the scenes helping the young people to present their motion to the moderator at the 1948 Annual Conference.*

"I'm Ted Chambers from Grand Rapids, Mich., and believe it or not, I'm 22 years old."

for direction. Then on Wednesday, June 16, a local radio station interviewed three people. Two of them were Dan West and Alma Moyers (Long). "I prayed a lot about what I should say," she remembers from her present home in Ohio, "and during that interview . . . I found myself saying that before the end of the week the young people would be proposing a new program for youth concerning peace and service. I just said that! And after I said it, I thought, 'Well, how do you know that?' It was just kind of like it was a word of knowledge. Somehow I knew it was going to happen. It was just like a gift of the Spirit or something."

Alma, Ted, Edson, and a fourth youth, Doris Ruth Myers (Brubaker), created a questionnaire that they distributed to more than 100 youth. Ninety-five percent said a volunteer program should be started and 89 percent said they would join it.

The next morning, Saturday, June 19, the youth discussed the results in a large meeting. That day, they knew, the BSC report would be presented to the Conference body in the afternoon session. This would be the time, they decided, to bring up the idea. But there was a lot to do. Someone had to write it up and figure out how to get it on the Conference floor.

Dan West helped them hurriedly draft the proposal and coached them on how to present it. They knew it was a long shot. It was nearly impossible to bring an item of new business to the floor at the last minute. The polity was clear; items had to go through Standing Committee and be placed on the agenda ahead of time.

M. R. Zigler, *who was executive secretary of the Brethren Service Committee inspired the young people in a speech at the 1947 Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida.*

Because Alma was a delegate from her home congregation in Ohio, she was stuck with the unenviable job of approaching the moderator, Dr. Calvert N. Ellis, president of Juniata College. She looked for him, discovered he had gone to lunch, waited, and finally caught him backstage.

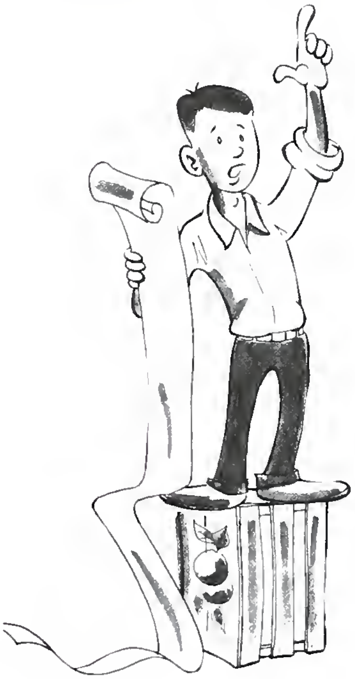
"It was just before the afternoon session," Alma recalls. "I was back behind this curtain, and I had this paper in my hand. I felt like a mouse against a giant. I told him the young people have an idea they'd like to bring up at Conference. I felt like I was only two inches high. You can imagine, being a delegate and talking to the moderator!

"He said, 'Well, we've never done this before. Standing Committee has to pass on everything.'

"Of course, I knew that. Dan West had already told us he didn't know if we could get this done. Calvert Ellis didn't put us down. He just said, 'We'll see what we can do about it.'"

Dr. Ellis was a man who appreciated correct procedure. He was not rigid, but he did not quickly abandon practices that worked well and were designed for a good purpose. He had only a few minutes to make up his mind. He knew he had the option of asking the delegate body if they were willing to accept this as an item of new business.

On the podium that year were the writing clerk, Dr. William Beahm, dean of Bethany Biblical Seminary; the reading clerk, Paul Robinson,


A whimsical drawing by Kermon Thomasson *of how Ted Chambers might have looked when he climbed onto the orange crate at the 1948 Annual Conference to make the motion asking for the creation of BVS.*

The motion that made history

The motion placed by the youth before the 1948 Annual Conference, which resulted in the creation of Brethren Volunteer Service: The typewritten original is in the possession of Alma Moyers Long.

We, a group of young people at the 1948 Annual Conference, because of a concern for Brethren youth, in the event of conscription, wish to present to the delegate body this plan for immediate action.

1. We plead for a plan of definite action to implement the general statement of the conference on the position and practices of the Church of the Brethren in relation to war.

2. We recommend that a broad plan of volunteer service be instituted for Brethren, especially those of conscription age, at once. We further recommend that this plan carry over into any crisis period as the core of our alternative service program. We are willing and anxious to cooperate with the General Brotherhood Board in constructing such a plan.

3. Finally, we ask for the immediate and continuing support of the entire Brotherhood in the carrying out and financing of such a program.

"I can still see him coming down the aisle carrying his orange crate, and everybody laughing about it."

In addition to its huge task *of organizing Civilian Public Service during World War II, the Brethren Service Committee coordinated volunteer service for men and women during the war years. Here is BSC in a 1944 meeting.*

pastor of the Hagerstown, Md., congregation and later president of Bethany; and the moderator-elect, Dr. Paul Bowman, president of Bridgewater College. Beahm and Robinson were willing to bend the rules and allow the tem. They sensed its mportance and neither was quite as starchy as Ellis. But it was Paul Bowman, fellow college president, who helped Ellis make up his mind. 'We'd better listen to he young people," Bowman said.

So Ellis decided. The call had to be his own, because there was no time to run the idea past Standing Committee. The afternoon session was about to begin. The young people had selected Ted Chambers, who was a delegate from his home church in Grand Rapids, Mich., to make the proposal. Ellis made an arrangement with Ted to give him a sign when it was time to bring up the item.

All the young people gathered in he balcony. It was agreed that Alma Moyers and Charlotte Anderson and Ted would speak to the motion. But here was one small problem. Ted Chambers was very short. How would he reach the mike? How would he be seen? It was Dan West who came up with the solution. That morning he went out and fetched an orange crate from a nearby grocery store.

Everything was ready. Alma and Ted were sitting side by side in the delegate section with the orange crate beside Ted's seat. Calvert Ellis was explaining that the youth were asking to bring a matter to the Conference floor. "The officers have met," he said, "and we believe this is of such importance that it ought to be admitted as business." A vote was taken and the delegates agreed to consider the matter.

Ellis gave Ted the sign. "I can still see him coming down the aisle carrying his orange crate, and everybody laughing about it," Paul Robinson remembers.

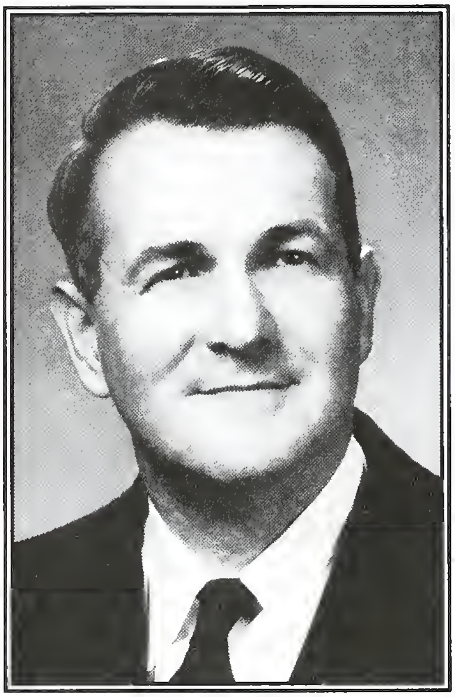
He climbed up on the crate, all 4 feet 10 inches of him, and took the mike. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I'm Ted Chambers from Grand Rapids, Mich., and believe it or not, I'm 22 years old." People laughed. The ice was broken. "And I have to interrupt this meeting," he went on, reading the motion and then making a speech.

One of the extraordinary things about that moment is that beyond those few opening words, no one living remembers what Ted said—not Ted, not Paul Robinson, not Alma Moyers Long. They remember that it was a persuasive speech, that it generated excitement, that it stirred almost immediate support.

After Ted, Alma Moyers spoke, and so did Charlotte Weaver. None of them can remember what they said, nor does anyone else remember. Authorized audio recordings of Conference began only the following year. There is no tape for 1948. It was an historic moment. People remember what it felt like, what they thought, but not the words that actually made it happen.

There were no speeches in opposition, and when the vote was taken, it was unanimous. The motion to create a volunteer service for young people had passed! The youth in the balcony broke into cheers, something Brethren of the time did not do in business sessions or anywhere else. "It took Conference so much by storm," Edson Sower remembers. "It was amazing the support it got almost immediately. Ted really won

"You could just feel the power of God in that place!"



Don Snider, *who was national youth director in 1948, would later become BVS training director in the 1960s.*

Participants in the workcamp *and peace institute at Salina, Kan., in the summer of 1947.*

the support of Conference."

"We felt it was a kairos moment," Paul Robinson says. "The time was right. The young people were concerned. We felt it was a great cause. We felt all of this overruled the objections of protocol."

Calvert Ellis admitted in a conversation many years later in 1994, just before he died, that he never expected the program to amount to anything and how wrong he was.

"I don't suppose any of us recognized how significant that moment was," Paul Robinson says. "We never dreamed that Brethren Volunteer Service would become what it has become. But we did think this was an idea whose time had come. If the youth had not been as insistent as they were, if Dan West had not been insistent, probably it would never have come to Conference that year. The unusual thing was that it came without being on the agenda."

"When the young people stood up and cheered," Alma Moyers Long recalls, "the whole Conference was surprised. I remember that evening at suppertime everybody was talking about it. It was a big thing. . . . The Holy Spirit was just so in evidence. It was just like Pentecost! Just like a football game! You could just feel the power of God in that place!"

She also remembers Dan West's comment, "This baby's born now! What do we do with it?"

The Brethren did more with BVS than anyone expected, even those idealistic young people. In the 50 years since the Colorado Springs action, Brethren Volunteer Service has placed more than 5,000 volunteers in projects in the US and all over the world. It has provided countless opportunities for volunteers to serve people in need and to build relationships across barriers of religion, race, language, and economic status.

Equally important, it has offered challenging experiences where the volunteers can learn about themselves and grow. It has given invaluable training to several generations of Brethren leaders and has encouraged many youth to go into full-time service in the church and elsewhere. As it celebrates its 50th year, it remains one of the most vital programs of the Church of the Brethren.

Jim Lehman of Elgin, Ill. is a writer and publisher of children's stories. He is working on a new project to collect and publish folk songs and stories for Brethren and people of like mind. His daughter, Jessica, is currently a BVS worker in Northern Ireland.

BVS healing the wounds of war

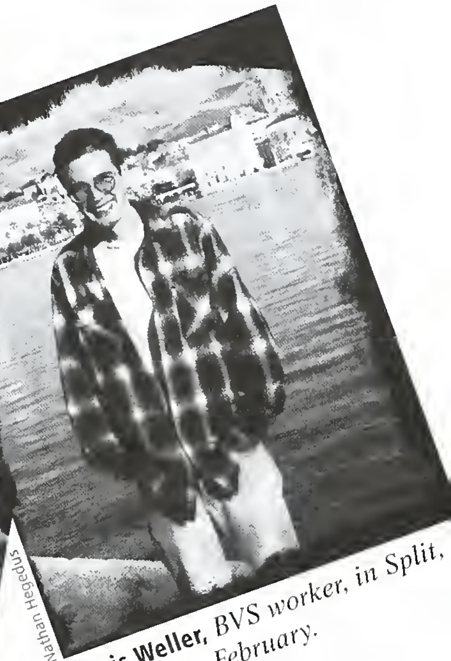
After a devastating war in Croatia, reconciliation is a long, slow process. Brethren Volunteer Service is there to help.

Gail Long

Nathan Hegedus *stayed on in a new assignment in Pakrac, Croatia, after his BVS tour there ended.*

Nathan Hegedus

Gail Long, *former BVS volunteer, now works for the United Nations in Klisa, Eastern Slavonia.*



Nathan Hegedus

Chris Weller, *BVS worker, in Split, Croatia, in February.*

BVS
now

BY NATHAN HEGEDUS

The war in Croatia is over. The Croatians gained their independence from a repressive, Serb-dominated Yugoslavia and the Croatian Army brutally crushed the Croatian Serb rebellions inside the country.

But the effects of the war linger in the most basic ways. Housing is the most important issue facing every group in the war-affected areas. Many houses were destroyed in the fighting. Many were burned by vengeful people on all sides. And many houses are occupied by refugees from the war in Bosnia. At least three groups—local Croatians, Serbs from Croatia who want to return to their homes, and the Bosnian refugees who occupy Serb houses— are all confused and more than a little desperate. These housing problems simply exacerbate the tensions left over from the war in Croatia fought in 1991 and 1992.

Reconciliation is a long, slow process and there is pain on all sides. Imagine how difficult it would be to start the process of rebuilding trust if you were not allowed to enter your own home. Or, on the other hand, if you were occupying someone else's home but had no place else to live. What happens when the owner wants to return and has the government on his side? Besides these problems, all of former Yugoslavia is just starting to undergo the transition from socialism to capitalism, further complicating questions of ownership.

Technically, the state owned all of these houses. But the state does not make much effort at reconciliation. Croatia is a country still flush with military victory and its first true independence in 700 years and so does not want to give much ground to Serbs who want their houses back. One Brethren Volunteer Service worker and two ex-BVSers are active in working on the housing problems in three regions of Croatia with three types of organizations.

Gail Long was in BVS for over three years, volunteering in Belgrade, Serbia, and Vukovar, a town in Eastern Slavonia, on the eastern border of Croatia, which recently completed a United Nations-administered transition to Croatian control. After BVS Gail became a UN volunteer, working on housing problems.

The problems were for the most part the same. Gail says that her UN job involves more "emotional support and listening to their problems than anything else." She met with local government officials and tried to direct the mostly elderly clients to the proper government offices. This was frustrating since she knew that the government officials would not help.

Gail thinks that the UN mission helped, and some people were able to return to their homes. But she is not optimistic for the future of the area. The number of violent incidents is actually low, but the general attitude of the authorities is reactionary and depressing. Much will be decided this summer when the weather allows more Croats to come to Eastern Slavonia and more Serbs to leave the region and return to their original homes elsewhere.

According to Gail, her BVS experience was invaluable for preparing her for her UN job. She learned to have faith in herself and to find her own way. She needed a strong sense of purpose to be effective in the surprisingly unstructured though bureaucratic UN. Most of the people Gail met through BVS in the Serbian peace movement and women's movement were devoted to their work. The UN, on the other hand, is just a regular paycheck for many of the internationals. BVS also immersed Gail in the ex-Yugoslavia. She had already extended her BVS term an extra year but did not want to leave the region because she felt too close to the people and events.

Here's an example of the complexity of her work: A Serb and a Croat came to Gail's office to try to solve their housing problem together. The Serb was occupying the Croat's home. But the Serb could not leave because a second Croat was occupying his original home in Osijek. And this third man refused to leave, even though his original home had been rebuilt. He did not want to be one of the first to return to the "Serb-dominated" war zone where he formerly lived.

The first Croat and the Serb were cooperating, but the authorities refused to help because of the interethnic cooperation. When they insisted the Serb leave the office, the Croat always left too. But even this cooperation broke down under the pressure of the Croatian reintegration of Eastern Slavonia. The first Croat eventually told his Serb friend that he would kick him out of his house if he did not leave immediately. The Croat was frustrated and desperate.

This three-way mess is typical of housing problems in the war-torn Balkans. But this one was "easy," compared to some problems, in that all three involved were from the same area. Out in Western Slavonia, that is not the case.

My name is Nathan Hegedus and I work for America's Development Foundation in Pakrac, a town in Western Slavonia, about two hours west of Osijek. I was one of four Brethren Volunteer Service workers to work here in Pakrac between 1994 and 1997 in a grassroots peace project.

I stayed in the Volunteer Project Pakrac for over a year and then helped start a youth newspaper in a project in Eastern Slavonia. I took this job back in Pakrac because it gave me a chance to become more intensively involved in this one region rather than start over someplace new. I could build on my BVS work here. In fact, my BVS experience in Pakrac is what made me qualified for the job. I knew the region, I knew the language, and I knew how to function in a difficult place like Pakrac.

ADF is an American organization that provides funding to local groups. In Western Slavonia, the focus is on free legal assistance.

Western Slavonia was a former UN-protected zone like Eastern Slavonia but with an important difference. In Western Slavonia in May 1995, the Croatian Army invaded the Serb-held part of the region and conquered it in a matter of days.

Between the initial fighting in 1991, which destroyed 80 percent of Pakrac, and the 1995 action, most of the region's 80,000 Serbs left. The question now is whether they can return if they want to rebuild their lives in Croatia.

The problems with returns are legion. If these Western Slavonian Serbs were refugees in the UN-controlled Eastern Slavonia they could easily get Croatian documents. But if they were in Serbia itself or in the Serb republic in Bosnia to the south, then getting Croatian documents is almost impossible.

The next important question is about housing. Is their house still standing? Thousands of homes were destroyed in the war. Many Serb homes in "peaceful" areas were burned or bombed in retaliation for the war going on elsewhere. Yet there are enough homes to house all the Croats and Serbs who stayed, as well as the returning Serbs.

However, Western Slavonia is filled with ethnic Croat refugees from Bosnia and Serbia. The occupation of Serb homes was legal under an old Croatian law. Now, under pressure from the international community, the government is changing the laws. But new laws mean nothing if the local authorities are unwilling to move the Bosnians out. It would be political suicide for a mayor to move out Bosnian victims of Serb aggression and then move in Serbs, whom the locals blame for the "aggression" in Croatia.

Of course most of the returning Serbs are not guilty at all. War criminals will not return to Croatia. But emotions run deep after a war. And if the Bosnians were kicked out, then where would they go? Even local Croats think many Bosnian Croats have exploited the social system, but the majority of Bosnian Croats are also innocent victims. They are just in the way.

So international organizations and governments both try to promote the almost impossible "three-way return." Here's an example: A Serb who occupies a Croat home in Eastern Slavonia wants to return to his home in Western Slavonia, which is occupied by a Bosnian Croat. The Bosnian Croat's home in Bosnia is occupied by a Serb from the Muslim part of Bosnia whose house is now occupied by a Muslim refugee whose house is occupied by a Serb from Croatia. The confusion can go on and on and on.

My job with ADF is to monitor and support the legal aid project. This means that my two assistants and I drive around to talk to the lawyers. The lawyers handle citizenship and property issues as well as social issues such as pensions and back taxes. All these issues were complicated by the war.

The lawyers often cannot help their clients in the face of government "administrative" silence. So they listen to the clients' problems and try to comfort them. I, subsequently, go to listen to the lawyers and give them a chance to discuss their problems, such as emotional exhaustion and overwork.

I am now one level removed from my volunteer days when I talked to the people. So I understand how important that support is for the lawyers. We also work with the organization to help it run more efficiently. I write reports intended to influence to some small degree the political pressure on the Croatian government.

After the pure grass-roots experience of volunteering with BVS, it is interesting to be slightly involved in the higher political games. I still believe that the everyday life of the citizens in Western Slavonia is the most important area for work. But the high-level political pressure is also necessary, especially in a centralized, almost authoritarian country like Croatia.

Chris Weller, a Brethren from Virden, Ill., is a Brethren Volunteer Service worker. He works for the Balkan Peace Team (BPT) in Split, Croatia, which is on the seacoast and is a paradise compared to Vukovar or Pakrac. Chris is the fifth BVSer to work for the Balkan Peace Team. BVS was integrally involved in the Balkan Peace Team from its beginnings.

Before going to work for the Balkan Peace Team, Chris volunteered in a rural region, which had also been under Serb control, near the Croatian capital of Zagreb. The Balkan Peace Team is an international NGO (nongovernmental organization) that monitors the political situation and provides support to local activists by accompanying them in situations where an international presence ensures safety.

Split was not in the war but is near Knin, the heart of the Serb rebellion in Croatia. The area around Knin was known as the Krajina when it was controlled by the Serbs. The Croatian military was brutal in the Krajina, murdering elderly Serbs and burning entire villages to the ground. Over 100,000 Serbs fled from the Krajina into Bosnia and Serbia.

So the basic issues here are the same as in Western Slavonia. Serbs want to return, but many of their homes are occupied by Bosnian Croat refugees, and the government, despite public assurances to the contrary, does not really want the Serbs back.

But one cannot just paint the Bosnian Croats as the bad guys. According to Chris Weller, "one of the most difficult things about the housing issues is that many of the Bosnian Croats do not have anywhere else to go. It would be easy to look at them as opportunists, here only for the free house. But this is not always true."

The Balkan Peace Team often serves as a crucial link between local grass-roots groups and big international organizations. This also helps the local organizations by developing their capacities.

All of us internationals will go home one day and hopefully Croatian civil society will be strong enough to keep moving the country towards openness and democracy.

"Without constant international pressure it will be difficult for Serbs to return to their homes," Chris says. He heard from one local that over 70 percent of Serb refugees would like to return to Croatia. But under what conditions would people actually return?

There are some empty, undestroyed villages in the ex-Krajina region, but they are too isolated for Bosnian Croats or even the Serbs who used to live there, due to the destruction of the local railroad line. The security situation is improving for returnees, in that the burnings, lootings, and physical harassment have almost stopped. Is that enough?

The bureaucratic harassment of the government makes life difficult in different ways. Chris, Gail, and I are all daily frustrated by our jobs. The situation can be a bit surreal.

Says Chris: "I was speaking with one human rights worker who lived in Knin the entire time. She said that the relations between the Croats and Serbs

(continued from page 17)

who lived in Knin before the war are relatively good. The biggest tensions are between not only the Serbs and Bosnian Croats but also between the 'local' Croats and the Bosnian Croats. This means that the relationships between the two groups that fought the war seven years ago now are the smallest source of tension."

There are small victories to go with the frustrations. Chris knew a few Serb families that were evicted from their homes but, with United Nations help, were allowed to return because the local government had no one to move into the homes. The changes in the housing laws are also hopeful, but will the government ever have the courage to implement the changes? Will the international community have the courage to challenge Croatia to change?

Chris, Gail, and I are working on issues that will not be solved quickly. Millions of people will need to work for years and years in order for Croatia or Bosnia to reach stability and prosperity. But one has to hope that the small steps being taken in Croatia by BVSers and ex-BVSers, among many others, will pay off in the long run. The hope is that one day all the people in this region will be able to live in the area and in the homes that they choose.

Nathan Hegedus is a former BVS worker. His story came to Messenger *by e-mail from Pakrac, Croatia.*

Brethrening ???

A word to work for

Her deep brown eyes send question marks. I try again, this time adding gestures. The question marks continue. I use different words. Then I see flashes of recognition. "Understand." Azra's face relaxes. She smiles.

All through the hour and a half we are together, we struggle to connect. I point to pictures and their labels from the Sunday advertisements. "This is a skirt. This is a shirt. These are shoes. This is a cupboard. This is a sink."

Words with *r*'s and *th*'s cause facial contortions.

"Ski*r*t," I pronounce.

"Ski*r*t" is echoed.

"Good." I point to the calendar. "I'll say the days of the week. Then you say them. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, *Th*ursday." Goran has watched my mouth. He sticks out his tongue and snickers. "*Th*ursday."

"Excellent! Bravo!" We all laugh.

"Now, let's practice the alphabet. Azra."

"I, beh."

"A, b," I correct.

We continue until I see they are tired. Concentrating on new sounds and trying to ascertain meanings is hard work. The Yugoslavian alphabet and sounds are different. Occasionally I sense recognition as Azra tells me their word that is similar.

I sing "America the Beautiful" and ask about their national anthem.

"No national song," Azra replies. "The war." Just as she had told me a previous day when I showed pictures of my family. "No pictures. The war." I feel sad.

When we began meeting six weeks ago, I kept raising my voice to make myself understood. I explained an apology. "I TALK LOUD TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND. I'm sorry."

They smile. "Okay." They were not offended.

Azra and Goran Trifkovic came to St. Petersburg from Sarajevo in August last year. They have both worked in a microchip factory in Largo with other immigrants, some Bosnian, some Cuban, some Vietnamese. Many weeks they work six days and some days overtime. Recently Goran began carpentry, his trade, with a friend who knows a little English. He likes the work but struggles with inches, feet, yards, and directions. His supervisor is American.

Azra is a beautician but has no license, so must continue working in the factory. She has beautiful black hair cut stylishly short, olive-toned skin, and dark brown eyes.

Goran loves to say, "You are welcome." He calls me "teacher." He is balding, has a round face, and a few teeth missing in front. When he pronounces words correctly he beams. "Good," he brags. "Good," I affirm. We both smile.

I must be careful that my responses to their truncated attempts at communicating are not more chopped phrases. So we work on complete sentences. "My work, Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Cuba. No English," Azra explains.

I write, then say, "At my work there are Yugoslavians, Vietnamese, and Cubans around me. No one speaks English." She repeats the sentences. Underneath, on the yellow legal pad I write, "At my work I am surrounded by Yugoslavians, Vietnamese, and Cubans."

"What *surrounded*?"

I show a circle with my finger—"surrounded."

"Understand." Her word and her eyes have told me. What a beautiful moment. After grappling, searching, gesturing, trying again, "understand." A word to work for.

—Jean Lersch, First Church of the Brethren, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Messenger *would like to publish other short, colorful, and humorous stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submissions to* Messenger, *Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at ffarrar_gb@brethren.org.*

THE PROBLEM WITH PLURALISM

There's more to the gospel than live and let live

BY DALE AUKERMAN

A recent sermon preached by a lawyer friend of mine was for me both stimulating and disturbing. He set forth a position that I've heard a great many times—most notably in Annual Conference worships and messages. His concern was that people and groups in the church are so inclined to criticize and attack one another. He pointed to those who see hemselves as standing for God's ruth over against those who have urned away from it.

His plea was that we be accepting of one another in spite of our differences. He urged, as is so often done, hat we Brethren accept our pluralsm and thus accept everyone, no matter, he seemed to say, what position is held. We were called to accept positions we may personally disagree with as having a place within the church.

I share the concern about mean and hostile attitudes. Love should shape all interactions between Christians, even when there are major differences in understanding. About this side of things I agree with my friend and so many others I have heard. But he and they focus completely on that one side. He said that what is crucial is not so much what we believe but how we behave toward each other; what is overridingly important for the church is that members be civil, gracious, and loving toward each other, especially when they disagree.

This approach fails to recognize that there is another side, which is very much in tension with the first side. If the New Testament is our rule of faith and practice, the focus on loving acceptance taken just by itself is a grave misunderstanding. If Jesus had lived out the stance that is being called for, he would hardly have gotten into trouble with the leaders of the religious establishment. He did criticize and challenge. He stated plainly that he saw his opponents as going against the true way of God. That upset them.

In the Gospels Jesus warned about false prophets and said that the community of his disciples would need to deal with that threat. ("Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits." —Matt. 7:15-16)

Many passages in the apostolic writings take up this motif; certain teachings and movements appearing even within the church are seen as constituting a denial of the gospel. ("I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel—not that there is another gospel, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ." —Gal. 1:6-7)

A pluralistic acceptance approach does not face the possibility of false teachings that go against the heart of the gospel. It focuses only on the imperative to love others and gives no attention to the imperative to defend the Christian message against whatever would distort or deny it. But the latter imperative is expressed many times in the New Testament.

Soon after Nazism came to power in Germany, the German Christians took over the leadership of the national churches. Their Christianity was shaped by Nazi ideology. Later there was general agreement that this German Christianity with its German ultra-nationalism, anti-Semitism, and total allegiance to an idolized leader was a perversion of Christian faith and that the so-called Confessing Church was right to oppose. A pluralistic acceptance approach would seem to have no recognition that there can be situations like that for the church. It is pathetically inadequate for any such situation.

A question for those who champion such an approach is this: Is there anything, any view or behavior (in addition to unaccepting attitudes), that must be seen as out-of-bounds and untenable for the Christian church? If there isn't, a person or group can advocate anything at all in terms of beliefs or actions and still be viewed as having a rightful place within the church. The church is seen as standing for nothing (except perhaps loving acceptance of everyone).

If those who take this approach will admit that some things are out-of-bounds and untenable for the church, then they too are recognizing that this imperative that others with differing views be lovingly accepted is not without limits. Then the question becomes, Where are the limits?

The biblical writers saw in the human story the continuous struggle between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood.

The biblical writers saw in the human story the continuous struggle between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood. They saw for all human beings the urgent, awesome need, before God, to distinguish between the contending sides and to go with right and truth. A pluralistic acceptance approach lacks this seriousness about those alternatives, for it does not see them in the biblical way. This approach moves with the intellectual and moral relativism that prevails in our society: Whatever beliefs and behaviors people hold to are all right and fine for them, if not obviously destructive of others.

Love is at the heart of Christianity, and it's easy to conclude that a pluralistic acceptance approach focuses on what is most basic. But the love revealed in Jesus of Nazareth was not grounded in a relativism with regard to what may be right and true. It was grounded in who God is as holy, righteous, and sovereign. Jesus in that love commanded, rebuked, showed anger, made amazing claims about himself.

Jesus and the New Testament writers assumed that his disciples should and could stand for truth over against error, for righteousness over against sin, for faithfulness over against unfaithfulness. Not only God's love but also God's truth can be furthered by human beings. Our comprehension of God's truth is limited and inadequate. Yet God gives us as Christians the task of striving to live and communicate that truth. A pluralistic acceptance approach focuses total attention on loving acceptance, but does not come to grips with the question of truth.

Can we find in the New Testament a contrasting stance that meets the difficult issues being considered? I believe there are the elements of such a stance set forth in a wide range of passages.

1. Some differences of opinion among Christians are about relatively minor matters and are to be accepted and lived with in the church. Romans 14-15:6 and 1 Corinthians 8 and 10:23-33 deal with differing points of view, especially in regard to what one can rightly eat (because of Old Testament dietary laws and the pagan ractice of sacrificing meat to idols). n such matters Paul urged that hristians welcome each other in heir differences (Rom. 15:7), not ondemn others, and not do things hat could bring the spiritual ruin of hose who are weak.

His prayer for the disagreeing roups in Rome was, "May the God f steadfastness and encouragement rant you to live in such harmony ith one another, in accord with hrist Jesus, that together you may ith one voice glorify the God and ather of our Lord Jesus Christ" Rom. 15:5-6). The different posiions could be brought into a armony in accord with Christ Jesus.

In our present-day Brethren conext many questions about the pecifics of baptism, feetwashing, nd the love feast or church polity nd program can be seen similarly as uite secondary matters.

2. There are other issues where hristian faith itself is at stake. In hese, Christians must hold to and ontend for what is the heart of the aith. Jesus claimed to be the way, nd the truth and the life (John 4:6). What God revealed and did in esus Christ is put before us in the ew Testament. In these writings ertain teachings, views, and lines of ction are seen as clearly in opposiion to Christ. Some things are, and ther things are not, in accord with hrist Jesus. Moving against the ospel of Christ are contrary ospels—even within the church Gal. 1:6-9).

The unity and harmony of the hurch comes not because all people, roups, and views should be seen as aving an accepted place in the hurch, but because "there is one pirit . . . one hope . . . one Lord, ne faith, one baptism, one God and ather of us all" (Eph. 4:4-6). Jesus aid, "If you continue in my word, ou are truly my disciples, and you ill know the truth, and the truth ill make you free" (John 8:31-32). By immersion in the revelation given through and in Jesus, Christians come to know the truth. They are also enabled to identify what is decisively important and what is less important.

John, the apostle of love, warned: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 Jn. 4:1). John did not see the command to love, which he gave first, as going against his warning about deceivers: "Any one who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work" (2 Jn. 9-11).

Dale Aukerman

Strong words indeed! Those who spread teachings about Jesus Christ that are contrary to those of Jesus and the apostles are not even to be given hospitality lest one slip into providing support for false ministries.

It is of course possible to dismiss or ignore all such passages in the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament. But that involves rejecting a considerable portion of those writings and the aspects of biblical understanding about God and Christ that lie behind them.

3. The New Testament standard for relating to persons in the church with whom we disagree is love. Love as set forth in the New Testament can include acceptance in its common meaning, but does not necessarily need to. Christians may see certain people in the church as advocating views that go against the heart of the faith and still reach out to them in love, even while contending against views they advocate. Disciples in their shared tie with Christ are to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15); and it is the Spirit who brings about needed change in heart and mind (John 16:8).

If that direction is taken, the temptation to become self-righteous, self-exalting, and condemnatory can be very strong. But the New Testament assumes that by God's grace Christlike love can be lived out toward individuals seen as caught up in grave error. "My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted" (Gal. 6:1 NRSV). Even if it develops that a person or group needs to be seen as having put themselves outside the Christian fellowship, they are still to be appealed to in love (Matt. 18:17; 2 Tim. 2:23-26).

4. In such matters it is crucial that we keep in mind Jesus' command to deal first with the log in one's own eye (Matt. 7:3-5). The intense seriousness given in the New Testament to adherence to the truth should impel us to ask first of all: Where am I in error? In what ways am I not living out the truth given in Jesus Christ? None of us are free from being taken in at some points by deceptions dominant in the world. Who of us heeds, in full obedience, the commands of Jesus to share what we have with those who have little? Yet in Matthew 7:5, taking the log out of one's own eye is not to foster a relativistic attitude of live-and-let-live. It is rather to get spiritually ready to go to the other person. Then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

5. **Jesus calls us to listen intently to each other in our conflicts and disagreements.** From the beginnings of the church, Brethren have seen Matthew 18:15-20 as a key passage. We are to go to the other person when there is a conflict or broken relationship. The hope is that the person being called into question will listen. But there is the implication that the person taking the initiative will also go in a spirit of listening. Perhaps something vital—even something that will change the outlook of the person going—will be learned from the person being approached. So it can be too when the interaction has to do with conflicting views in the church.

One can move from guidelines to examples. It is from Jesus and the New Testament that Christians together in the church can discern what is crucial to faith and faithfulness. I venture the following points:

✝ A. In scripture God is Thou, the supreme Person, who knows and loves us; God is transcendent Creator, distinct from the creation; God is ever active in and sovereign over creation and history. Views that go against the basic biblical understanding of God tear down the faith of the church. An example is the view that God is the force of creativity, goodness, and love within the universe, somewhat comparable to gravity.

✝ B. Jesus and the apostles saw his death as having ultimate significance for the relationship of God with humanity. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28). "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Cor. 5:19). Teachings that see his death simply as a supreme example of selfless love, commitment, and nonviolence go against the gospel.

Everything that Jesus taught and lived is in total contrast to what is done in making war.

✝ C. The resurrection of Jesus as person is central to the gospel. Teachings that go against what is given in the New Testament about that resurrection are a threat to the church. An example is looking to an eternal Christ that is said to have been in Jesus but is not the person who taught and healed in Galilee and died on the cross.

✝ D. The earliest Christian confession of faith was the proclamation, Jesus is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3). This understanding is expressed in the Great Commission given by Jesus (Matt. 28:18-20). Teachings that view some aspects of human living as not meant to be subject to his lordship contradict this understanding.

✝ E. Everything that Jesus taught and lived is in total contrast to what is done in making war. Alignment with the military and with going to war goes starkly against the lordship of Jesus.

✝ F. Jesus Christ by his dying has broken down every dividing wall of racial, ethnic, and national hostility and superiority so that all who become members of the one body can live in unity and peace (Eph. 2:11-18). Views and actions that build up such walls negate this part of what Jesus has done for humanity.

✝ G. Jesus stood with the poor, the suffering, and the victimized of his time. He called his disciples to live out his way of love, sharing, and sacrificial service. Alignment with the United States in its role as the richest and most powerful nation in the world moves in a direction opposite to that taken by Jesus.

For the first two centuries, Brethren generally held to the stance that the New Testament is to be taken as the rule of faith and practice. There was relatively little disagreement about basic beliefs about God and Jesus. These were seen as quite clear in the New Testament. This consensus unraveled in the 20th century, and Brethren were poorly equipped to deal with the divergent and conflicting theological streams that emerged. This lack remains with us.

In the New Testament, Christians are called to hold to what has been revealed in Jesus Christ and to discern and reject what goes against him. They are to test the spirits to see whether they are of God (1 Jn. 4:1). We in the Church of the Brethren need to return to this New Testament perspective. The church does not have creeds or an elaborate confession of faith. But where it does not veer from its heritage, it looks to Jesus as Lord and to the New Testament as the rule of faith and practice. This is how we hold to the truth and reject what is false.

Dale Aukerman, both a contender and a mediator in many church conflicts through the years, lives near Union Bridge, Md. All scripture references are from the RSV unless indicated otherwise.

Letters

Fifty years ago I used to say if there are telephones, mimeograph machines and committee meetings in heaven, I ain't goin'!

Source of identity confusion

The article beginning on p. 6 of the une issue of MESSENGER reports on he confusion of our identity on 'PrimeTime." (Good for the callers-n who reminded Diane Sawyer's producers that it was not us who was being referred to.)

But, we (including MESSENGER) contribute regularly to this confusion of identity. The reference on page 1 to he article on page 14 says that "three Brethren churches were devastated by ire." There *is* a denomination known as The Brethren Church . . . but that sn't us! The sentence should read 'three Churches of the Brethren were devastated by fire."

If we can't keep our identity straight, we have no reason to expect hat others will do so.

Clyde R. Shallenberger
Baltimore, Md.

The meaning of meetings

Many of us can relate to your May editorial, "The meaning of meetings." To paraphrase Ecclesiastes 12:12: 'Of making many committee meetngs there is no end and much such meetings is a weariness of the flesh." Fifty years ago I used to say if there are telephones (always ringing), mimeograph machines (messy), and committee meetings (long and boring) in heaven, I ain't goin'!

Then I ran across Proverbs 15:22: 'Without counsel, plans go wrong, but with many advisers they succeed." And what about Jesus' assurance: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matt. 18:20).

For Bible study, prayer, worship, fellowship? Of course! For purposeful, creative committee work? Why not!

Harold Z. Bomberger
Palmyra, Pa.

Wholly impatient

Concerning the article, "Holy impatience" [see May MESSENGER], about William Sloane Coffin who is to be a featured speaker at the Orlando Annual Conference: I would suggest in all fairness to the conservative Brethren that there should be another featured speaker right after Coffin's speech. I would suggest Billy Graham. Perhaps at the altar call the leaders and adherents to Coffin could go forward and confess their sins and ask forgiveness for having had Coffin speak.

Coffin has some good ideas. You can find some good things even in a garbage dump.

Ray Rowe
Royal City, Wash.

What's in a name?

In the late 1960s the Church of the Brethren Mission Board was encouraging the Indian Brethren to join an ecumenical movement to form a new church of North India.

The Elgin office, concerned that we drop the vestiges of colonialism, wrote to me as medical superintendent of the Brethren Mission Hospital at Dahanu Road, India, suggesting that I work with the local church and the non-Christians to find a new name for the hospital that would not have connotations of colonialism. So I sought the opinions of local people.

A Zoroastrian man said, "Don't change the name. We always name our hospitals after the founding person or organization. It seems right to us." Hindus and Jains who also were supporters of the hospital showed no interest in a name change.

Local Muslims were more difficult to engage in discussion, although they utilized the hospital's services. So when I went to a gathering of multiple religious faiths in Allahabad, North India, I determined to ask the Muslim speaker his opinion. He responded, "In India mission hospitals have always given top quality care to all people. The word 'mission' connotes quality. But if, for instance, you were to use the word 'royal' in naming your hospital, we would have problems with that."

Now 30 years later and 12 years since the last funds were sent by the Elgin office, the hospital continues to operate in the city of Dahanu Road with the name Brethren Mission Hospital over the front entrance greeting all who enter.

Fred W. Wampler
Mountain City, Tenn.

Publish or perish

I am interested in the heritage of our church and influences which continue through colleges such as Elizabethtown College.

Can we preserve the heritage and continue to preserve the values into the next century? I recently found a book by Murray Wagner Sr., published in 1965, titled *To Heal the Broken*. I ordered all nine copies available from the Brethren Historical

The opinions expressed in Letters are not necessarily those of the magazine. Readers should receive them in the same spirit with which differing opinions are expressed in face-to-face conversations.

Letters should be brief, concise, and respectful of the opinions of others. Preference is given to letters that respond directly to items read in the magazine.

We are willing to withhold the name of a writer only when, in our editorial judgment, it is warranted. We will not consider any letter that comes to us unsigned. Whether or not we print the letter, the writer's name is kept in strictest confidence.

Address letters to Messenger *editor, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.*

Library and Archives to show to staff members at Brethren Village, where Murray is a resident. Then I saw another book with more of Murray's sermons, entitled *Watchers of the Springs*, a collection of rural life sermons published in 1950.

Murray's sermons have humor, but always made a valuable point. He won first prize for all three of his sermons included in the collection, and was recognized as one of the leading rural pastors and preachers in America.

Just as we preserve the classics in poetry and literature, we as a denomination have a responsibility to preserve this heritage. I believe it is important to publish the works of the many historic giants in the Church of the Brethren who have formed the foundation of our values, and to preserve this heritage for the next century.

Arlene Bucher
Lancaster, Pa.

In touch with Butler Chapel

Recently my husband and I attended the Butler Chapel A.M.E church near Orangeburg, S.C. [see "A dream fulfilled," March Messenger]. Pat, my husband, worked two weeks last year helping to rebuild the church.

We attended Sunday morning services, and, much to our surprise, there were two other Brethren couples there, one from Mount Pleasant, Canton, Ohio, and the other from Pleasant Valley, Middlebury, Ind.

Pat had made a white birch cross which he presented to the church that morning. Pastor Patrick Mellerson said he would preach a "sermonette" that morning, even though a Brethren pastor had told him that "sermonettes are preached to Christianettes." After listening to this 20-minute "sermonette," I asked him what a real sermon was like!

We also experienced something there that I suggested could be integrated into the Brethren worship service: a drummer! With a full set of drums, the drummer, who sat immediately behind the pastor, kept up a steady beat (including cymbals at the really high points), emphasizing each point. Who could sleep with the drummer drumming?

We spent some time out at the burned-out church. The church, with the overgrown cemetery and the moss hanging from the trees, surely was a quiet and lonely place. I brought a wild cactus back with me to remind me of all that I felt over that weekend.

Lucy Basler
Webster, Wis.

Statement on war

The 1970 "Statement of the Church of the Brethren on War" says the church expresses "complete dissent" from assumptions that the nation must be prepared to go to war, that "every young man must spend time in the military," and that "an overwhelming share of our heavy federal taxes" must be devoted to military needs.

a. The Preamble to the US Constitution states that the "people" desire provision for "defense." b. The people entrust their elected representatives to raise and support military forces to suppress "insurrections" and repel "invasions." c. The public does accept as "normal and inevitable" preparation for defense from foreign and domestic enemies. d. The public does not expect "every young man to spend time in the military service." Provisions exist for conscientious objection and alternate servie. e. An "overwhelming share of our heavy federal taxes" are not allocated to the armed forces. Annually $300 billion are required to pay interest on national debt, while the present allocation for national defense is approximately $250 billion annually.

I recommend that the Church of the Brethren, which appears to be at odds with the Constitution, direct its energies toward abolition or amending the US Constitution.

Section III of the statement says that, "We cannot, in the event of war, accept military service or support the military machine in any capacity." My recommendation: Honor those who have made the supreme sacrifice and all others who served to preserve all freedoms, including freedom to worship and freedom to avoid military service as a conscientious objector.

The statement implies that military expenditures are not "constructive purposes of government." Therefore, the church suggests several tax payment options, including withholding the estimated portion of taxes allocated for war.

I recommend reminding members who unilaterally withhold that portion of federal income tax allocated for national defense to voluntarily, in the absence of an audit by the Internal Revenue Service, pay the penalty for their illegal action. If the church

Controller/Assistant Treasurer

The General Board of the Church of the Brethren seeks a person to develop and maintain accounting and financial systems and procedures; manage day-to-day financial operations; and be responsible for cash management, corporate financial procedures, non-expendable funds, risk management, and corporate reports. Assignment will be at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill. Applications due July 21.

For information contact:

Elsie Holderread at 800-742-5100
Office of Human Resources

:hooses to provide legal services for
hose who violate the law, inform
nembers of this action in order to
illow non-violators the opportunity
o withhold financial support for
hese cases.

During my 56 years of experience,
ncluding active military duty in
Vorld War II and the Korean war,
ictive reserve military duty, and in my
:ontact with many veterans, never has
i soldier or a veteran expressed to me
i desire to fight in a war.

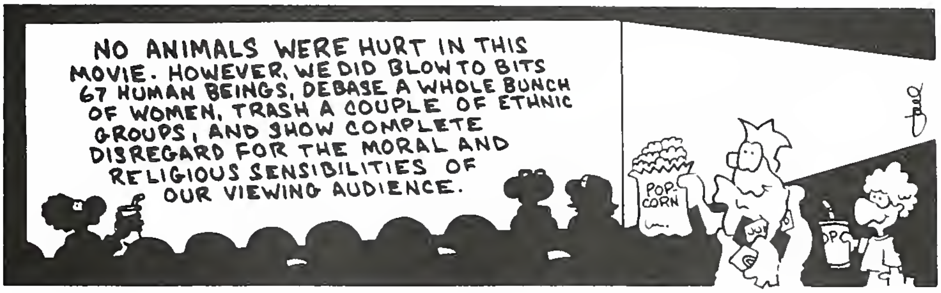
I believe those who drafted and
ipproved the 1970 statement acted in
;ood faith. However, as one who
)bserves considerable departure of the
tatement from the US Constitution, it
s difficult to defend the US from all
:nemies, foreign and domestic, and
:oncurrently subscribe to the state-
nent. The "Just War" concept,
leveloped by Augustine and later
efined by Thomas Aquinas, which
iolds that war is morally permissible
ınder certain conditions, is not con-
idered in the statement. As a result,
nembers of the Church of the
3rethren face difficult choices of
vhether to accept the statement with-
)ut reservation, to selectively accept
ınd reject portions of the statement,
o ignore it, or to avoid hypocrisy by
issociating with a fellowship which
loes not force choosing between it
ınd the Constitution.

Congregations are encouraged to examine the statement and support resolution of the differences between the position of the church on war, and the role of citizens established by the Constitution. May the Lord be with those who are involved in this spiritual and moral struggle.

Robert H. Saylor, D.Ed.
Professor Emeritus
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Windber, Pa.

Pontius' Puddle

Send payment for reprinting "Pontius' Puddle" from MESSENGER *to Joel Kauffmann, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN 46526. $25 for one time use. $10 for second strip in same issue. $10 for congregations.*


NO ANIMALS WERE HURT IN THIS MOVIE. HOWEVER, WE DID BLOW TO BITS 67 HUMAN BEINGS, DEBASE A WHOLE BUNCH OF WOMEN, TRASH A COUPLE OF ETHNIC GROUPS, AND SHOW COMPLETE DISREGARD FOR THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS SENSIBILITIES OF OUR VIEWING AUDIENCE.
POP CORN
POP
Joel
© Joel Kauffmann

Thoughts on homosexuality

In this letter I refer to that of the Berkey (Pa.) church deacons' letter in the April MESSENGER.

Perhaps the responding letters came from persons who know the deacons personally. If so, they may know something that the letter does not reveal. But the letter itself tells me that the deacons wrote with tears—with sorrow, not hatred—including confession of their own sins.

All indications suggest that the critics see the deacons as hateful because the deacons follow Jesus' pattern of loving concern for all of us sinners, while bluntly identifying their/our sins. No, of course we do not have a record of Jesus' position on homosexuality, but we do have his ringing endorsement of the Genesis proposition as to God's creation plan for human families. And his readiness to name sins of his fellow Jews, when they violated Torah. "Go, sin no more!"

Sadly, when scriptures do not support our preferred ethical decisions and conduct, we wiggle and squirm until we can wriggle out of the dilemma, or else conclude that scriptures are not uniformly binding on our "advanced" stage of ethical insight!

Finally, I affirm—what we cannot objectively accuse the deacons of failing to notice—that homosexuals suffer agonizing personal conflicts and pain. And that, perhaps, it could just as well have been me. But I am told that Christian ethics offers rigorous discipline of bodily appetites as a path to righteousness and spiritual health. And, last of all, hard as it is for me to understand and believe, believers daily do get healings for which science has no explanation.

J. Roy Valencourt
Goshen, Ind.

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Cincinnati Church of the Brethren fellowship meets for workshop & support in n.e. area of Cincinnati. We welcome others to join us or bring needs to our attention. Contact us c/o Cincinnati Friends Meeting House, 8075 Keller Rd., Indian Hill, OH 45243. Tel. (513) 956-7733.

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New members

Antelope Valley, Billings, Okla.: Tori Reaves, Hayley DeVilbiss

Black Rock, Glenville, Pa.: Amanda Brant, Amy Brant, Joshua Brant, R. Kyle Fake, Kayla Fake, Amber Hanson, Kyle Hubbell, Kevin Hubbell, Katie Renfro

Blue Ridge, Va.: Ann and George Ferrell

Chiques, Manheim, Pa.: Esther Donley, Brian Miller, Marlin Shellenberger

Dixon, Ill.: Christine D. Mekeel, Jason M. Mekeel, Mary E. Jacobson, Olivia R. Harms, Kelsey E. Reed, Sarah A. Fischer, Megan M. Whitson, Melissa A. Fordham, Falon Nicole Larson, Justin A. Shaffer, Diana L. Manderscheid

Dupont, Ohio: Scott McIntosh, Eric Homier, Sara McIntosh, Lisa Taylor, Heidi Dix, Heather Dix, Kira Rankin, Kristen Rankin, Tayla Dix, Crystal Taylor, Lynn Ellerbrock, John Dix

Dundalk, Baltimore, Md.: Jody Ellingson Gunn, Allison Barr, Jennifer Frank, Sheila Scarboro

Good Shepherd, Springfield, Mo.: Calvin Hlaváty, Bryan Lucore, Danielle Lucore

Highland Ave., Elgin, Ill.: Jeff Abbott, Steve and Bonnie Graham, Scott Johans, Pam Keller, Bettina Perillo, Matthew Rucker, Gerald and Shirley Witt

Hooversville, Pa.: Douglas Diamond

Lebanon, Pa.: Alicia Breidenstine, Harry Carpenter, B. Alan Dissinger, Jr., Patricia Fulk, Jonathan Hurst, Kristin Kettering, Amy O'Byle, Staci O'Byle, Julie Price, Keith Price, Katie Smith, Amanda Soliday, Rebecca Stuckey, Alex Wolfe, Vicki Wolfe

Lewiston, Minn.: Timothy Radatz

Lititz, Pa.: Joseph Bingeman, Alysa Diller, Megan Fleming, Matthew Getz, Michael Getz, Benjamin Hess, David Hess, Matthew Hess, Martha Hess, Howard Mowrer, Hyla Mowrer, Brittany Ober, Katie Stauffer, Ashley Tennis, Georganne Way, Karin Charles, Larry Earhart, Ruth Earhart, Coanne Luckenbill, Duane Luckenbill, Christopher Moseman, Jill Moseman, Bruce Ulrich, Floy Ulrich, James Charles

Manchester, N. Manchester, Ind.: Ken and Christen Miller-Rieman, Gene and Beth Stone, John and Naomi Mishler, Dan and Mary Riccius, Olden and Myrtle Mitchell, Clara Zimmerman, J. Edward and Mildred Gilbert, Ron and Bev Petry, Lowell and Martha Yohe

Maitland, Lewistown, Pa.: Pam McCarter, Guy Moscato

Maple Grove, Ashland, Ohio: Judy Cook, Adeline Godby, Gail Streit, Jason Keener, Sharon Keillor

Maple Grove, New Paris, Ind.: Ron Cripe, Darin Bernaert

Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Mable Smith, Linda Wevodau, Sharon Clark, Terri Martin, Heather Martin, Joseph McCorkel, Shane McCorkel, Amanda Crouse, Shane Kumler, Colin Scott

Middle Creek, Lititz, Pa.: Lindsey Hosler, Jeremy Kline

Modesto, Calif.: Joe Duncanson, Casey Duncanson

Mohler, Ephrata, Pa.: Kevin and Tara Deiter, Andrew Miller, J. D. Kreamer, Spencer and Augusta Nissly

Monroeville, Pa.: Jennifer Joy Hernley

Monte Vista, Callaway, Va.: Kristen Furrow, Shannon Clingenpeel, Alan and Julie Scott, Michael Furber, Kevin Furber, Andrew Furber

Nappanee, Ind.: Becky Hufford, Brenda Herr, Jerry and Connie Sauhart

Peters Creek, Roanoke, Va.: Elizabeth Bolt, Rita Craft, James Garst, Kevin Otey, Todd Plunkett, Steve Poff, Pam Poff, Jason Stevens, Chris Stevens, Rick Tuggle, Janet Tuggle, Amy Williams, Darrell Woolridge, Sharon Woolridge, Barbara Wright

Pine Creek, N. Liberty, Ind.: Ryan Flickinger, Diana Godfrey, Mildred Hunter, Barbara Pearson, Rebekah Replogle, Becky Trusty, Marcus Trusty, Richard Trusty, Ashley Wolff, Vickie Wolff

Prairie City, Iowa: Sarah Elrod, Tawnya Hopkins, Betsy Kane, Cindy Kane

Quakertown, Pa.: Michelle Balkit, Brandon Crouthamel, Rosemary and Christopher Vanelli, Steve and Cindy Hunter

Ridge, Shippensburg, Pa.: Faye Koontz, Amy Byers, Scott Lamason, Santell Miller

Sangerville, Va.: Adam Shank, Nathan Shank, Bethany Shank

St. Petersburg, Fla: Jean Figueroa, Axel Figueroa, Anna Belle Sipe

Union Bridge, Md.: Jon Lamb, Susan Lamb, Gene Straub, Dennis Hoffacker, Sue Hoffacker, Robin DiMartino, Martha Pennington, Dawn Fritz, Sara Yingling, Bryan Amsel, Caroline Amsel

Walker's Chapel, Mt. Jackson, Va.: Amelia Allen, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Coffman, Tiffany Mobley, Diane Ludwig, Edward Ludwig Jr., Jamie Pennington, Johanna Pennington, Jacob Grogg, Vivian Ryan

Waynesboro, Pa.: Carolyn Misner

West Eel River, Silver Lake, Ind.: Thomas Meredith, Valerie Meredith, Richie Reynolds

Wilmington, Del.: Kevin Anderson, Karen Anderson, Bob Hoy, Alice Hoy

Woodbury, Pa.: Beth Gearhart, Scott and Sue Black, Luther and Dorothy Steele, Ryan Claire, Kenneth Wyant, Christine Bowser

Yellow Creek, Goshen, Ind.: Phil Sechrist, Ashley Schrock, Sonia Luevano

Wedding Anniversaries

Abshire, Randy and Helen, Roanoke, Va., 60

Bollinger, Abram and Ruth, Lititz, Pa., 55

Brubaker, Leo and Norma, Prairie City, Iowa, 60

Clapper, Marion R. and Kathryn J., Hollidaysburg, Pa., 55

George, David and Betty, Quakertown, Pa., 50

Helser, Raymond and Everil, Nappanee, Ind., 70

Moherman, Will and Virginia, Ashland, Ohio, 50

Rothrock, Dayton and Rebecca Spear, McPherson, Kan., 50

Shaub, Howard G. and Frances, Hollidaysburg, Pa., 50

Tucker, James and Rachel, Nova, Ohio, 50

Utz, Harley and Sylvia, Pittsburg, Ohio, 80

Walters, William and Dorothy, Sebring, Fla., 50

Watring, Glenn and Billie, Ashland, Ohio, 60

Ministry Summer Service Placements:

Berkey, Holly Jo, to Palmyra, Pa.

Brockway, Joshua, to Crest Manor, Ind.

Carter, Keith, to Briery Branch, Dayton, Va.

Eshleman, John, to Palmyra, Pa.

Gordon, Mary, to Eillisforde/ Whitestone, Va.

Haas, Amy, to Nampa, Idaho

Hade, Rebecca, to Linville Creek, Va.

Helsel, Rebekkah, to Oakton, Va.

Hood, Jessica, to Germantown, Pa.

Rivera, Angel Gullon, to Moorefield, W. Va

Licensed

Doudt, David W., May 2, S. Whitley, South/Central Ind.

Hostetter, Elvin D., March 4, Buffalo Valley, Southern Pa.

Johnson, Randy, May 2, Big Sky, Northern Plains

Lawver, Charles Franklin, March 4, Buffalo Valley, Southern Pa.

Murphy, Granville, May 2, New Hope, South/Central Ind.

Ordained

Douglas, Scott, April 18, Highland Ave., Elgin, Ill.

Pastoral Placements

Black, Rachel, from Hagerstown, Md. to Beaver Creek, Hagerstown, Md.

Burk, Kelly, seminary student, to Richmond, Ind. (part-time)

Cooper, Leslie, from Waterford, Calif., to Pipe Creek, Peru, Ind.

Knapp, Mark, from other denomination to Arcadia, Ind.

Miller-Rieman, Christen, from seminary to Manchester, N. Manchester, Ind.

Deaths

Albright, Harold, 74, Roaring Spring, Pa.

Barclay, Violet, 89, Rockwood, Pa., April 30

Barr, Aileen, F., 83, Ashland, Ohio, March 29

Benson, Robert, 58, La Verne, Calif., Dec. 28

Blevins, Otis U., 83, Taylors Valley, Va., May 3

Brumbaugh, Grayce, 87, La Verne, Calif., March 16

Carver, George, 62, Falls Church, Va., April 30

Case, Almeta Ramsey, 66, Wichita, Kan., March 21

Casteel, Naomi, 85, New Oxford, Pa., April 16

Coleman, Richard F., 81, Roanoke, Va., April 15

Cox, Rev. Alvin S., 83, McClure, Pa., March 30

Crumpacker, Morris, 79, Roanoke, Va., April 1

Driver, Rev. F. Wise, 97, Bridgewater, Va., Feb. 26

Fay, Iva M., 83, Waterloo, Iowa, May 3

Flora, Margaret, 85, Roanoke, Va., May 4

Fox, Delbert L., 85, Goshen, Ind., April 2

Frantz, Delmond, 92, Hastings, Mich., Jan. 17

Garber, Dennis, Austria, Feb. 3

Grady, Marvin E., 84, Waterloo, Iowa, April 28

Graybill, Mazie, Stevens, Pa., March 25

Guyer, Velma, 95, Woodbury, Pa., Jan. 16

Harley, Elsie H., 88, Sebring, Fla., May 3

Heinbaugh, Ray, 102, Somerset, Pa., May 14

Hess, Laura, 90, Neffsville, Pa., Oct. 17

Hildreth, Carl, 80, San Diego, Calif., March 22

Hoffman, Franklin D. Jr.: 38, Ashland, Ohio, March 28

Horst, Harvey, 67, Ephrata, Pa., April 13

Hunter, Charles Ray, 74, Muncie, Ind., May 13

Iglima, Alice, 76, Baltimore, Md., Jan. 7

Keiper, Alma N., 101, Martinsburg, Pa., March 23

Keiper, Pauline M., 88, Martinsburg, Pa., March 19

Kirchner, Carol Ann, 54, Cass Lake, Minn., May 14

Kulp, Robert, 50, Ephrata, Pa., March 8

Lutes, Clifford, 75, Nappanee, Ind., March 10

Mahoney, Daniel, 87, La Verne, Calif., Jan. 8

Martin, Gladys S., 86, Sebring, Fla., April 30

Martin, Lora R., 89, Thurmont, Md., May 19

Matheny, Russell B., 74, Dalton, Ohio, April 10

Nelson, Esther, N. Manchester, Ind., May 5

Orange, Hubert, 94, Troutville, Va., April 4

Rife, Paul, 81, N. Manchester, Ind., March 17

Rogers, Gertrude, 92, Roanoke, Va., April 6

Sanner, John, 87, Rockwood, Pa., May 8

Shaffer, Ruth, 84, Nappanee, Ind., March 10

Shaffer, Toylie, 100, Hooversville, Pa., March 29

Stites, John W., 63, Hershey, Pa., March 22

Studebaker, Marie, 101, Tipp City, Ohio, March 29

Swigart, George, 77, McClure, Pa., March 12

Trible, Charles, 72, Akron, Ohio, April 17

Warden, Doris M., 51, Laurel Bloomery, Tenn., May 5

Warner, Alice M., 94, Thurmont, Md., April 22

Way, Alice J., 66, Ashland, Ohio, Jan. 25

Weimer, Paul E., 86, New Madison, Ohio, April 29

Whitacre, Alan L., 65, Lancaster, Pa., Jan. 24

Wines, Peggy, 57, Roanoke, Va., Feb. 4

Zink, Hazel, 66, Champaign, Ill., May 7

Editorial

Freedom to be dangerous

Ponder the story of Jesus again." This is the theologian Walter Brueggemann speaking. "We forget how odd the story of Jesus is. Jesus subverted everything that had been trusted. It is the small body of the subverters who are the hope of the world."

With this introduction, the 50 of us in the weekend seminar in Washington, D. C., began a wild ride through Acts and Luke, then to Genesis, then the Psalms, Isaiah, back to Mark. "A lot of people think the Bible is about sex," says Brueggemann, who is Old Testament professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Ga. "It's not about sex. It's about economics."

Upside-down economics. Subverting the established order. The Jews celebrated the Sabbath as a way to distinguish themselves from the Babylonians. They would not submit to the demands of the managers on that day. As God had rested, they would rest, in the belief that "We are not the maker but the made ones." Likewise, we are always having to decide how much to submit to the demands of the managers of our own economy, those who believe resources are scarce. We must strive because there is not enough to go around.

Though the Jews were captive they were free. They remembered that God had freed them from the Egyptians and provided the gift of manna, the central symbol of abundance in the Bible. God would provide freedom and abundance again. They were free from the grip of scarcity and emboldened by the belief that God would provide. There is enough for everybody. God defeated the powers of Babylon and told his people to go out in joy.

"In the shadow of a generous God, we will learn ourselves to be generous."

In the same way God will defeat the forces that have power over us. First we have to trust that God will provide for our needs. There will be enough. Brueggemann: "The central task of our lives is to accept God's freedom and depart from Babylon."

It was this same spirit of freedom and newness that whooshed into the church at Pentecost. The spirit took over the lives of this small band and set them loose in the Roman Empire to turn the world upside down. They no longer recognized the power of the established economic and political system, but found their security in the spirit. It caused them to do what they had never intended to do. Like heal people and drive out demons.

They were to heal without money. In Luke 9, when Jesus sent the disciples out with the power to heal he told them to "take nothing for your journey." It was because they took nothing, and were dependent on only God for security, that they were able to heal. In Acts 3 Peter told the lame man he had no silver or gold. It was not in spite of but because of Peter's penniless condition that he was able to heal the man and send him off "walking and leaping and praising God."

Jesus was full of the spirit of God's newness when the devil tried for 40 days in the wilderness to talk him out of it. Instead of succumbing to the voice of the established order, he went out and read from Isaiah 61. His inaugural announcement was that God had anointed him to turn the world upside down. He would proclaim the jubilee year, when the rich give back to the poor.

Luke begins with songs on this theme. The song of Mary, the song of Zechariah, the song of Simeon. These are songs of treason against the political-social-economic order of the day. "He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly" (Luke 1:52). These are dangerous songs, says Brueggemann: "Newness happens in the world when long-silenced people get voice enough to sing dangerous songs."

Dangerous is not a word often applied to Christians these days. Is it because we are too tied to the established political and economic order? Is the church so much geared to control and security that the spirit of Pentecost doesn't have a chance with it? Are we afraid we might lose our jobs? Is it because we don't trust God to provide abundance?

If it's money we want, and the power that comes from money, there will never be enough. All the hard work and striving produces anxiety and results in brutality. But if we accept God's generosity, we are promised (Matt. 6) an endless supply of food, water, health, and friends. We will be so rich that we need not be greedy. We are given new openness to our neighbor. "In the shadow of a generous God," says Brueggemann, "we will learn ourselves to be generous."

The invitation is always open for us to depart from Babylon.

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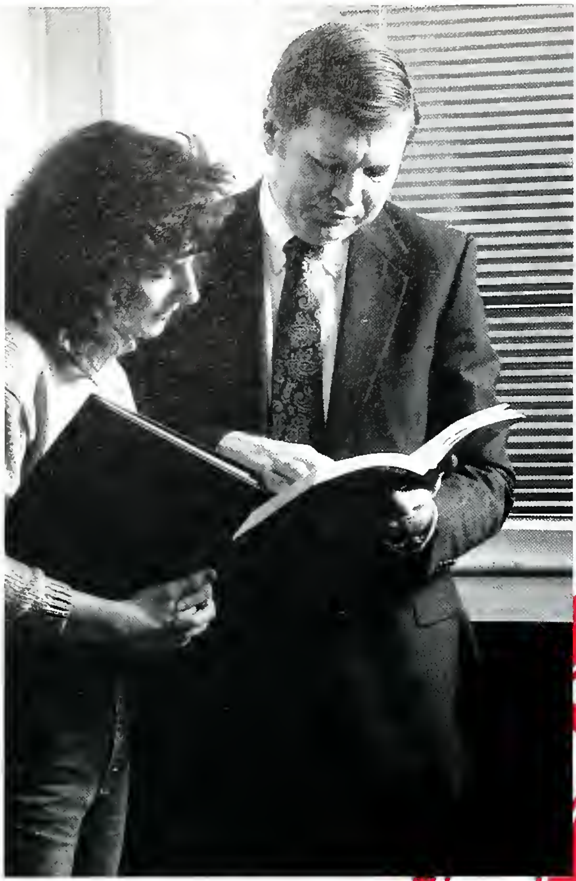

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1999 Annual Conference Moderator and Professor of Business/Economics at McPherson College, Lowell Flory is a representative of lay leadership within the Church at its best. Whether guiding students in a classroom setting or sharing leadership around a governing board table, Professor Flory is known for his ability to frame tough questions in such a way as to invite others into a search for the best possible solution.

McPherson College — its alumni, trustees, faculty, staff, and students — is enthusiastic and supportive of Moderator Lowell Flory's leadership within the life of the Church of the Brethren. We like the way he exemplifies the mission of McPherson College!

Church of the Brethren August 1998 www.brethren.org

Messenger

...so that God
is not ashamed
to be called our
God

COLLABORATION IN ORLANDO

Stitching the church together

BVSer Marty Shifflet, guest Calvin Mullins, Cafe 458, Decatur, Ga. Jeff Leard photo.

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Messenger

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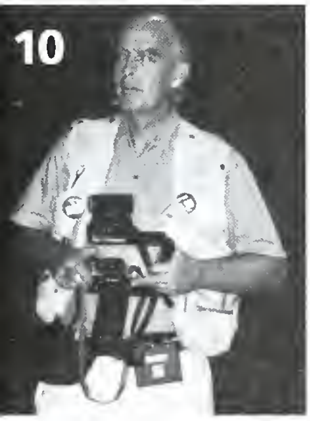
...so that God
is not ashamed
to be called our
God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A bout the photographer: This
issue features Annual Confer-
nce photographs by Phil Grout of
/estminster, Md. Grout is a fine
rt photographer and writer who
as worked as a photojournalist
round the world since 1966. He is
ne author of numerous books,
ncluding *Seeds of Hope*, published
y Brethren Press. He has recently
ormed a "micro press," The Pub-
sher at Treehouse, which
pecializes in handmade artist
ooks. This is the sixth Annual
'onference he has photographed
or MESSENGER.

On the cover: Ruth Haldeman, left, of Greencastle, Pa., and Ruth Bushong, of Columbia, Pa., work on the Annual Conference quilt sponsored by the Association for the Arts in the Church of the Brethren. Bushong, a member of the Mountville (Pa.) congregation said she has been quilting "all my years" and works on the quilt at Annual Conference every year. Haldeman, a member of the Shanks Church of the Brethren, said quilting offers a good time to socialize and discuss Conference business, "but we were pretty quiet this year."

22

David Radcliff

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Features

10 Orlando '98: Annual Conference in photos

Photographs by Phil Grout capture the spirit, the drama, and the fellowship of the 212th Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren. Highlights of Conference included a gathering of Brethren Volunteer Service workers from around the world, and special guests from Nigeria.

22 Memories of Guatemala

To recover from the painful memories of death and destruction during their protracted civil war, Guatemalans were encouraged to overcome their fear and publish their stories. But the priest who led the project then was murdered in retaliation. The article is by David Radcliff, director of Brethren Witness, who was himself a witness to these events of courage and faith.

26 Dangerous dunking

This is a warning. Baptism will change your whole life. Forever. It is a near-death experience that kills your old way of thinking. That is replaced by a radical new way of living, the way of the cross. Ken Gibble, pastor of the Chambersburg, Pa., congregation, explains the danger.

28 How we can be like Zacchaeus

Duane Grady of Indianapolis, Ind., a pastor and Congregational Life Team staff member, shows readers how Jesus can transform their lives like he transformed Zacchaeus. All they have to do is to climb up in the sycamore tree.

From the Publisher

I always enter each Annual Conference season with a mixture of dread and excitement. Dread because the two months before Conference are the busiest time of year for those of us preparing printed materials, merchandise, a bookstore, exhibits, meal events, insight sessions, and endless other things. And dread because of the exhausting marathon of meetings that begins days before Conference itself begins.

But excitement because of the energy created when several thousand Brethren come together for work and worship. Excitement because the total of Annual Conference is much more than the sum of its parts.

It's impossible to convey the value of Annual Conference to those who have never attended one. I believe the Church of the Brethren would be a different church—a more vital one—if every member attended Annual Conference at least once.

If I had to pick just two elements from Brethren life that most profoundly symbolize our belief and practice, I would choose love feast and Annual Conference.

Love feast goes to the root of who we are. It marries serving and being served, the individual and the communal, daily bread and the Body of Christ, the practical and the transcendental.

Annual Conference does some of the same things on a larger scale. In this arena we struggle and laugh, we fight and love, we speak and listen. No matter how frustrated we get, we come back year after year for more of the same. We keep coming back because, when all is said and done, we want to be together.

One of the reasons my husband and I take our three children to Conference is for them to experience this uniquely Brethren event. They are developing Annual Conference friendships. They are gaining a sense of how wide their church is.

They are also asking questions. Why do we refer to other conferencegoers as "sister" and "brother"? Can anyone come to Annual Conference, whether they're Brethren or not? What makes Brethren different from other people?

Like the ritual questions raised by Jewish children during the Passover meal, the questions raised by our children give us the opportunity to tell the Brethren story.

Someday our children may distance themselves from the church. I hope they don't, but questioning and challenging is a normal part of developing a mature relationship with God. I believe the experiences we give them now build up a reservoir from which they can draw when they are grown. They may not be able to articulate now what Annual Conference means, but they know it feels good to be there. They know the big community is gathered for work and worship, and that we are earnestly seeking what it means to do the will of God.

I need that reservoir too. While I'm exhausted at the end of Conference, I'm also rejuvenated. I'm refreshed by being with the sisters and brothers.

See you next year in Milwaukee—for the pause that refreshes.

Wendy McFadden

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A dining room for legendary home ec prof

A walnut-framed plaque honors Mildred Siek, professor emerita, and hangs in the special dining room in McPherson College's Student Union. Siek taught many classes during her 27 years as head of McPherson College's home economics department. She is a legendary perfectionist—but practical.

Students in her Quantity Cookery Class made "to-the-minute" schedules of tasks to be done, when and by whom. "I still do that when I manage fund-raising dinners," said former student Kay Troyer Schrock at the April 10 dedication of the refurbished dining room she and her entrepreneur husband, Larry, financed and gave to the college.

ildred Siek, *flanked by Kay Troyer Schrock and Larry chrock in front of the fireplace wall where the plaque edicating McPherson College's special dining room to iss Siek will hang.*

This scheduling worked for Siek when she orchestrated the annual Booster Banquets served to about 550 college alumni and friends during the 1940s and 50s. "After organizing those banquets, serving 150-200 in a class project seemed easy," recalls the 92-year-old Siek.

She stressed strengthening the family to "her girls" and set a professional example. She served frequently on committees, and spoke on panels and programs.

She retired in 1971 and in 1975 moved into the nearby Brethren retirement complex, The Cedars. For 14 years she was president of The Cedars Service Guild that planned chapel services three days a week. She managed the Gift Nook for eight years; was chairperson of the scholarship committee for six; and launched the home's annual fund-raising bazaar.

As an octogenarian she decided to cut back her actvities. She became telephone coordinator of meals to church members, and often ended up cooking and delivering those meals herself. She continues to make bibs for the residents.

Siek, whose hair is lightened with silver now, confided she had made the bright blue dress she wore to the dedicatory luncheon in her honor. It fit her perfectly, of course.

—Irene S. Reynolds

Panora celebrates 'Heritage and Hope'

The Panora (Iowa) Church of the Brethren has declared 1998 to be a year of "Heritage and Hope." Throughout the year various activities will take place to celebrate the history of the congregation and its faith.

Each quarter a service celebrating different phases in church history is held. The years chosen to be representative of the Church of the Brethren faith are 1740, 1863, and 1930.

The celebration has included a beard-growing contest, a series of one-act dramas written by member Avis Finley, and a songfest. On August 23 there will be an old-fashioned picnic with the opening of a time capsule buried by the junior high youth 30 years ago.

Those who have been members 50 years or more will be honored at an Oct. 18 homecoming celebration. Past members and pastors are encouraged to attend. Anyone who has a special memory from the Panora church is encouraged to send it to Beth Ferree, PO Box 693, Panora, IA 50216. These will be included in a book to be published this year.

—Beth Ferree

Outpouring of love for injured Amish man

On Oct. 5, 1997 there were 150 members of the Amish community of Sauk County, Wis. gathered for worship on a farm. The second story floor of the building in which they were worshiping collapsed, sending the congregation into the stable below. Six persons were injured, one of them, Henry Yoder, seriously. His neck was broken.

In January the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC) sent a letter to member churches asking them to help the Amish community with Mr. Yoder's medical bills, which then totaled $170,000. The office of the District of Illinois and Wisconsin also circulated the appeal to its Church of the Brethren congregation. By spring the Henry Yoder Medical Fund had received $63,000 in response. The Amish community has reported to WCC that, although Mr. Yoder is not expected to walk again, his condition is stable and he has limited use of his arms and legs. The contributions received in response to the letters, together with those from Amish communities around the country, covered all of Mr. Yoder's medical bills.

—from Ecu-News

Generation of BVSers remembers Rensberger

Annamae Rensberger, 60, of Pomona, Calif., died May 26.

Upon graduation from college, Rensberger entered Brethren Volunteer Service. She served assignments in numerous European countries, including Germany, Sweden, and the former Yugoslavia. She then joined the Church of the Brethren General Board staff as assistant director of BVS training, a position she held for more than 11 years, during which time she connected with more than 1,270 BVS volunteers. She resigned from the General Board staff in 1977.

Rensberger then joined the staff of Woodbury University, where she served as an administrator for 17 years prior to her retirement. She was a member of La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, where she sang in the choir and designed liturgical furnishings.

A pastor is nearby for Brethren at Mayo's

Knowing that people from all over the US are referred to the Mayo Clinic and connecting hospitals in Rochester, Minn., the Church of the Brethren Northern Plains District is offering pastoral contact for Brethren patients and their families while at one of the medical facilities.

The clinic is within the district's boundaries and is within easy driving distance for two pastors — Gordon Hoffert, pastor of Lewiston (Minn.) Church of the Brethren, and Frances Townsend, pastor of Root River (Minn.) Church of the Brethren. Hoffert and Townsend are making themselves available because most Brethren patients at Mayo's are too far away for care from their own pastors. The district will pay for the pastors' expenses out of its "Rochester Ministry" fund. Pastors who have parishioners at Mayo's are encouraged to contact the district at 515-964-4816 or CBurkholder_ds@brethren.org. Or call Hoffert (507-523-3117) or Townsend (507-765-4772).

The newly renovated *Glade Valley Church of the Brethren.*

Glade Valley finishes renovation project

Glade Valley congregation, Glade Towne, Md., dedicated its newly renovated facility on April 26. Originally built to be a college chapel and recital hall, the building's interior was remodeled to provide adequate classrooms, nursery, restrooms, administrative, and fellowship areas. The redesigned sanctuary now provides a more intimate worship setting for the small congregation. The roof and heating systems were replaced and a new entry constructed as part of the $500,000 renovation project.

Following in John Kline's hoofprints

lder John Kline *is portrayed by Emmert ittinger, right, and Elder Daniel Thomas, eft, is Jason Bauserman. They arrived on orseback to greet the congregation waiting n the lawn of Hiner Church of the Brethren.*

The John Kline Missionary Riders, dedicated to reviving the fading memory of Elder Kline's visits to Brethren families of western Virginia, retraced his trail on horseback May 29-June 1. Twelve riders took part in this second annual "celebration ride" of about 60 miles through some of the country's most scenic areas in Virginia, where Kline rode between 1835 and 1864. The riders retraced one of the typical missionary rides of the famous Dunker in celebration of his 201st birthday. It was sponsored by the Shenandoah District Historical Committee and Emmert F. Bittinger. The group began its ride in Rockingham County, Va, spent its first night at the Crummett Run Church of the Brethren in West Virginia, then traveled across Shenandoah Mountain to Hiner Church of the Brethren in Virginia. There they attended Sunday services led by Gerold Senger, pastor of the Hiner church, and four of the riders told more about Kline's life and ministry among the mountain people of Virginia. Riders this year included: Marion Bowman, Maria Bowman, Faye Wampler, Joe Wampler, Fred Garber, Kathryn Ludwick, Joe Evans, Glenn Bollinger, Ned Conklin, Teresa Townsend, Margaret Geisert, and Joel Geisert. Emmert Bittinger organized the event and drove the support vehicle.

inging homebuilders ravel to Malawi

team of 20 "Habitat ingers," mostly from lympic View Church of he Brethren in Seattle, ash., will travel to alawi in August for three eeks. This Global Village ork team, sponsored by abitat for Humanity, is nique in that it is a choir nd a construction crew. embers will build friendhips through the sharing f music while constructng a home alongside the ecipient family.

The group is being led y Bob Kauffman, lympic View Church of he Brethren choir direc- or, who has experience eaching music in Africa. ith Thelma, his wife; ohn Braun, Olympic iew's pastor; and Braun's ife, Velda; and daughter, ali, the team has already erformed throughout the eattle area at various undraising events.

Other team members from Olympic View are Patty Berg, Roger Edmark, Frosty Wilkinson, Martha Bosch, Sid Bosch, Janet Lamont, and Mike Stern.

Stern is a Brethren songwriter who composed "Count Well the Cost" for last year's Annual Conference. He has written a new song for Habitat For Humanity called "Every One Of Us Deserves A Home."

Contact Mike Stern at mstern@u.washington.edu for ways to support the group or to obtain sheet music of his songs.

Youth lead others to 'Take the Pledge'

Eleven young people from West Charleston (Ohio) Church of the Brethren have learned about the historic peace position of the Church of the Brethren in a church heritage class.

The lesson inspired them to promote peace in their own church by signing the pledge against violence distributed through the Brethren Witness office. Then they set up a table at church and encouraged other congregation members to take the pledge.

After two Sunday mornings, 61 people had signed the pledge, thus saying yes to these statements: "I won't fight to kill. I will fight injustice. I will fight hatred. I will fight racism. I will fight hunger. I will fight to make sure that everyone has what they need to live as God intends. I just won't fight to kill."

The class was taught by Thomas Hanks, youth director, who commented: "I especially like the sixth statement. It implies that we should work not only to make sure that people have their material needs met, but also to make sure that they hear the Good News of Jesus." Contact Hanks at thanks@wesnet.com.

At 87, she delivers meals to the elderly

Miriam Kolle was in her mid-60s when she began delivering for Meals on Wheels. Now, 22 years later, the 87-year-old member of the Harmonyville Church of the Brethren, Pottstown, Pa., is still driving a 25-mile route to serve meals to elderly clients, most of whom are 10 years younger than her. In April Kolle's volunteer work was featured in the Pottstown *Mercury*, which said she also maintains large flower and vegetable gardens and helps her son mow acres of lawn. Her son is John Kolle, pastor of the Harmonyville church. How long will she deliver meals? "That's up to the Lord," she told the newspaper.

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

News

Ministry Summer Service interns begin assignments

Eleven Church of the Brethren young adults headed to their summertime assignments in June as Ministry Summer Service interns. Now in its third year, the MSS program provides young adults the opportunity to spend a summer with a mentor in the pastoral ministry field.

Ministry Summer Service interns *and leaders met for orientation at Bethany Theological Seminary. They are, front row: Judy Mills Reimer, John Eshleman, Lancaster, Pa. Middle row, from left: Angel Gullon, Castañer, Puerto Rico; Holly Berkey, Holsopple, Pa.; Amy Haas, Overland Park, Kan.; Allen Hansell; Mary Gordon, Waynesboro, Va.; and Rebecca Hade, State College, Pa. Back row: Chris Douglas; Joshua Brockway, Louisville, Ohio; Keith Carter, Decatur, Ind.; Rebekah Helsel, Altoona, Pa.; Jessica Hood, Flora, Ind.; and Richard Stiver, Ansonia, Ohio.*

Disaster aid helps Alabama, Africa, and Afghanistan

Three grants totaling $18,750 have been allocated recently from the Church of the Brethren Emergency Disaster Fund.

- $11,250 for support of Church World Service's $225,000 response to spring storms and floods that struck across the country. These funds will support inter-religious recovery efforts in South Dakota, Pennsylvania, and New York.
- $5,000 in response to a May 30 earthquake in Afghanistan that measured 7.1 on the Richter scale, killing over 3,500 people and leaving more than 60,000 homeless. This grant will help Church World Service purchase 1,500 tents, 3,000 blankets, and 1,500 food baskets that will be distributed to 1,500 households in 15 villages.
- $2,500 to support Western Pennsylvania District's response to the tornadoes and high winds that blew through the Salisbury, Pa., area May 31 – June 1. There were 43 homes destroyed and 37 homes suffered major damage

Two 20-foot containers of medical supplies were shipped by the General Board's Emergency Response/Service Ministries in June from the Brethren Service Center, New Windsor, Md., to the Republic of Congo on behalf of the Medical Benevolence Foundation. Twenty-five 3,000-gallon canvas water containers have also been shipped to Ecuador, along with 5,000 five-gallon water jugs.

Thirty thousand dollars was allocated from the Church of the Brethren Emergency Disaster Fund to assist with two ongoing disaster response projects of the Church of the Brethren General Board's Emergency Response/Service Ministries. An additional $20,000 has been allocated for a rebuilding project of six months to one year in Birmingham, Ala. Following tornadoes that struck in April, $5,000 was allocated to support child care volunteers and to pay for the delivery of 720 Church World Service school kits. This commitment to a building project is needed, said ER/SM manager Miller Davis, because 45 percent of the people being assisted in the region have no insurance. The allocation will be used to work with a local interfaith agency in opening this long-term project.

An additional $10,000 has been allocated in response to spring tornadoes and floods that struck

Florida. Of the $50,000 that was approved in May, $43,555 has been used. The additional funds will allow ER/SM to continue its repair and ebuilding work.

An allocation of $7,500 from the Church of the Brethren Global Food Crisis Fund (GFCF) was approved o assist famine relief in the west African nation of Mauritania. This money will be forwarded to Action by Churches Together, which is seeking a total of $52,506 to establish a mother/child feeding program. Food, medicines, and training will be provided by the World Food Program and UNICEF.

Staff changes announced for BVS, SERRV, On Earth Peace

Todd Reish of Elgin, Ill., has esigned as coordinator of Brethren Volunteer Service Orientation, effecive Nov. 6. At that time he will move o Richmond, Ind., to join his wife, Brenda, who in August will begin employment at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond. She curently serves as controller for the General Board in Elgin.

Todd Reish has served the General Board since July 1994, coordinating 6 BVS orientation units

Ned Stowe of Lombard, Ill., has greed to serve as the General Board's volunteer controller while a earch for Brenda Reish's successor ontinues. Ned is a retired adminisrator from George Williams College.

Kate Johnson, On Earth Peace Assembly's program director, has esigned effective early August to pursue studies at Bethany Theologial Seminary, Richmond, Ind.

According to Tom Hurst, OEPA irector, Johnson joined the organiation in July 1996 and provided a tabilizing influence on OEPA's program that had been carried the three previous years by short-term Brethren Volunteer Service workers. During her tenure, more than a dozen peace academies for junior and senior high students were held and a new peace retreat for young adults was established.

First hunger funds on their way to southern Sudan

An initial Global Food Crisis Fund grant of $132,500 has been forwarded to the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) for hunger relief and development assistance in southern Sudan.

Sudanese communities of displaced people will be the principle beneficiaries of the aid, part of a $238,000, three-year project approved by the General Board in March.

One grant will support Blessed Bakhita Girls School, home to over 400 girls from across southern Sudan. The village of New Cush will receive funds for a child-feeding program, school supplies for adults and children, and seeds and tools for community members. A women's development program in Narus will receive grants for small-scale income-producing projects, including tailoring and bread-baking.

The NSCC's peace department will receive assistance for its conflict resolution training programs. Bicycles will be purchased for justice and peace committee members at the sprawling Kakuma refugee camp. Emergency food relief will be provided for the drought-stricken community of Mundri.

The New Sudan Council of Churches is the Church of the Brethren's partner in Sudan. "We are pleased to move ahead in providing this first installment of our multiyear commitment to our brothers and sisters in southern Sudan," said Global Mission Partnerships director Merv Keeney.

For information on how Sunday School classes, youth groups, and congregations can participate in this project, or to borrow a Sudan photo display, contact David Radcliff, director of Brethren Witness.

SERRV teaches Guatemalans what Americans want

How does an expert weaver living in the Guatemala highlands begin to understand the needs of a young woman from Manhattan and incorporate this knowledge into her weaving?

This seemingly insurmountable gap was bridged recently by SERRV International, the Church of the Brethren self-help handcrafts organization, when it brought 44 representatives of 21 community-based artisan organizations from Guatemala and El Salvador together with a group of highly skilled people of different perspectives. The seminar was held May 15 – 17 in Guatemala.

Robert Chase, SERRV director, initiated the seminar to help artisans regain some of the Guatemalan gift, housewares, and textile markets that have been lost in recent years to producers from other developing nations.

Experts from the United States, Holland, the United Kingdom, and Guatemala led workshops and panel discussions for the artisan representatives. "They thirst to understand the North American and European consumer and to be informed of the trends as they develop," said Chase of the artisans and their representatives. Chase challenged crafts and clothing producers to integrate the information gleaned from the conference with the rich cultures of their countries and their unique skills to develop new products for domestic and international markets.

Summer workcamps offer lessons for a life of service

Seven workcamps offered this year by the Church of the Brethren General Board's Youth/Young Adult Ministries will involve 154 youth, young adults and advisers.

The first workcamp, a young adult trip to El Salvador, took place in June. This group helped build a playground and Children's Ministry Center in Los Talpetates.

Also in June, Brethren Revival Fellowship cosponsored a senior high workcamp to the Dominican Republic. They painted two churches, one in San Salvador and one in Arroyo Saludo.

The second senior high workcamp was June 22–28 in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. There the youth assisted elderly residents, painted a home for mentally and/or physically challenged adults, performed routine maintenance jobs, and worked with children at a residence for abused or neglected children.

The first junior high workcamp was June 17–21 in Harrisburg, Pa. The youth worked for the Brethren Housing Association at Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren. A second junior high workcamp was July 5–9 at Camp Ithiel in Gotha, Fla. Work projects focused on conservation efforts at a state park and wilderness preserve.

Another workcamp was held July 8–12 at Northview Church of the Brethren, Indianapolis, Ind. This group helped refurbish homes in Indianapolis' inner city. The final junior high workcamp will be Aug. 12–16 in Washington, D.C. Participants will volunteer in soup kitchens and food banks.

This year's workcamp coordinator is Emily Shonk, a Brethren Volunteer Service worker. Jonathan Brush is serving as summer workcamp assistant.

"Workcamps provide a unique opportunity for youth to follow in Jesus' footsteps as they learn what serving others is all about," said Shonk. "A lifetime dedicated to helping others is not at the top of most 'when I grow up I want to ...' lists — it's a perspective that has to be learned. This summer we'll be modeling and teaching service at each of our workcamps."

Washington Office calls for support of Peace Tax Fund

Now is the time to support the Peace Tax Fund bill (H.R.2660) in light of verbal support from Rep. Tom Delay (R-Tex.), House majority whip. Although he is not an official sponsor of the proposed bill, the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund reported that he spoke in favor of it recently while in Texas.

Now he needs to hear from Brethren and others who oppose taxes for military purposes. His support could help bring on other legislators as cosponsors.

Since its inception in 1708, the Church of the Brethren has openly expressed its opposition to war. During the Revolutionary War, recorded minutes indicate that Brethren were struggling to define what action to take with regard to government conscription and the payment of "war taxes." The recommendation by the Conference body was to examine one's conscience and to act as a result of Christ's leading, with support being given to all those who chose to pay or not to pay taxes.

Some Brethren who paid their taxes would designate the money "for the needy," but would allow the government to decide ultimately how to use those funds. During the Civil War, the peace churches were successful in convincing the Union to modify its approach to the use of tax revenues. The government agreed to use monies collected as bounty from conscientious objectors for "the benefit of sick and wounded soldiers" rather than for hiring substitutes.

The Church of the Brethren has recently called for the establishment of a World Peace Tax Fund through several General Board and Annual Conference statements.

By supporting the establishment of a Peace Tax Fund, we can lift up an integral part of our Brethren heritage. In April 1972 the World Peace Tax Fund bill was introduced by Rep. Ron Dellums of California; the official national campaign was launched in May.

Thanks to legislation passed in 1940 establishing alternative service for drafted conscientious objectors, CO's have not been required to participate in active combat. Even so, more than one quarter of every tax dollar goes to current military expenditures. Over 19 percent goes to pay for past military debt.

A Peace Tax Fund would allow conscientious objectors and others acting out of conscience to designate that total portion, 44 percent of every tax dollar, to life-giving governmental programs. They include the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children; Head Start; the U.S. Institute of Peace; and the Peace Corps.

The Washington Office urged Brethren to contact Tom Delay, urging him to support the Peace Tax Fund bill. Letters should be addressed to: Representative Tom DeLay, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Phone: 202-225-5951; Fax: 202-225-5241; e-mail: the whip@mail.house.gov.

—HEATHER NOLEN

Resources and Opportunities

Annual Conference resources—audio, video, and printed—are available fol-owing this year's annual meeting:

- a video wrap-up — concise highights from the week, including business, worship, and social activities. The video is 20 minutes long, and costs $26.95.
- a printed wrap-up summarizing the Conference week through text and picures. Printed wrap-ups are used primarily by churches for distribution to members in conjunction with congregaional reports by Annual Conference delegates. Cost is $12.50 per 50.
- a video of the General Board's Live Report, an hour-long report using drama and video to tell the story of General Board ministries. Cost is $19.95.
- a sheet detailing the official actions of the 1998 Annual Conference, at no charge. Contact the Annual Conference office at annualconf@aol.com or 800 523-8039.
- audiotapes of each worship service sermon and three sessions by William Willimon at the Minister's Association conference. Cost is $4.95 each. Orders may be placed by calling 800-441-3712.

The Western Plains District of the Church of the Brethren has prepared a videotaped 12-session study of Chalmer Faw's *Acts* (Herald Press, 1993). The video features Faw, former professor of New Testament at Bethany Theological Seminary, personally introducing his commentary section by section. This nexpensive videotape is available from Lahman-Sollenberger Video, Route 1, Box 164, Annville, PA 17003 (717-867-4187). This tape would be useful for Bible study, or for anyone who might want to present a workshop on Acts. The Western Plains District office (316-241-4240, or, Rich Hanley, P.O. Box 594, McPherson, KS 67460) will suggest a person ready to lead a workshop. Reviewers of Chalmer Faw's commentary have responded, "It makes Acts truly live in our day," promoting a message that "confronts individuals, groups, and systems with Jesus, who brought a gospel of love and forgiveness that challenged the very foundations of society." *Acts* and all other titles in the Believers Church commentary series are available from Brethren Press.

Some of the most stirring passages of scripture are the songs, poems, psalms, hymns, and laments found throughout the Bible. How these texts were used by the early church and how they connect with the songs and hymns of today is examined in *Hymns and Songs of the Bible* by Mary Ann Parrott, a forthcoming title in the Covenant Bible Studies series. Parrott, a musician specializing in organ and composition, lives in Pomona, Calif. The book is available for $5.95 plus postage and handling. Contact Brethren Press at brethren_press_gb@brethren.org or 800-441-3712.

A different style of mission support is being initiated in the General Board's search for a mission coordinator for the Dominican Republic. The board is seeking congregations and individuals to support this new mission venture. Given recent cutbacks in mission, this placement can proceed only as supporting partners come forward. "This is an effort to respond to congregations and individuals who wish to designate funds to support mission," according to Merv Keeney, director for Global Mission Partnerships. "The idea is to raise funds for this placement specifically, rather than through the unified budget. A key goal is to foster a closer connection between the funders of the mission and the mission personnel." For further information contact Global Mission Partnerships, financial resource counselors, or Congregational Life Team members.

"Games That Byte: Helping Youth Evaluate Computer Games" is a new hands-on curriculum "that helps youth evaluate the unspoken assumptions and harmful effects of violent video games." This new resource uses Philippians 4:8 as a foundational biblical text to help youth consider values alternative to those implied in violent video games. It is produced jointly by Mennonite Central Committee, Ontario, and Christian Peacemaker Teams. The resource is geared primarily to junior high Sunday school classes or youth groups. Participants play games on church-based computers or on computers brought from homes. An appendix with quotations, data, and additional resources on violence is included. Order from Brethren Press.

The Brethren Encyclopedia's 1998 catalog has been released. New additions to this year's edition include a Brethren video series, consisting of 30 video sessions on seven videocassettes containing over 13 hours of teaching. William Eberly of North Manchester, Ind., serves as instructor. A study guide is included. Cost is $95. Another new offering, "God's Means of Grace," written in 1908 by C.F. Yoder, studies the church's important practices. Ten additional Brethren-related items are included in the catalog. To receive one, call 215-646-1190.

Plans are underway to produce a fourth volume of *The Brethren Encyclopedia*. The schedule calls for the manuscript to be completed next year, with the new volume to be published in 2000.The new volume will include additions and corrections to the first three volumes (published in 1983-1984), new articles on topics that have emerged since 1980, and a comprehensive index. Carl Bowman of Bridgewater (Va.) College and Don Durnbaugh of Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa, are co-editors. The editorial board is seeking corrections and additions to the previously published volumes for inclusion into volume four. These corrections should be sent to Durnbaugh at Box 948, Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA 16652.

ORLANDO '98

Faithfully taking care of business for the 212th time

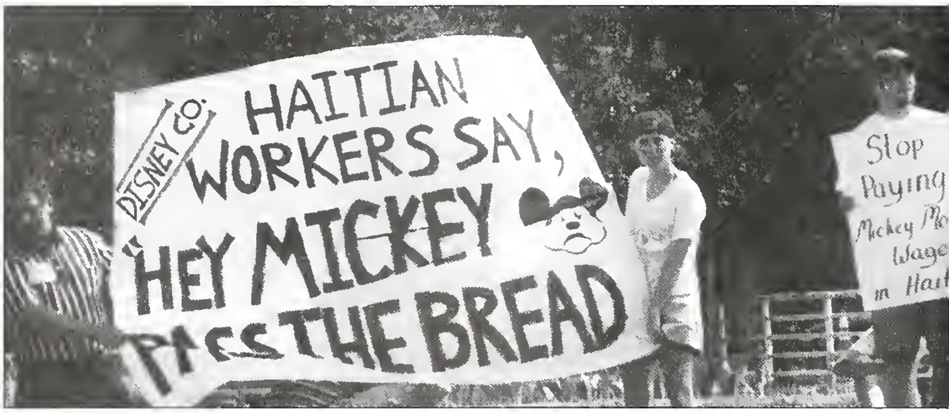
"Collaboration" was the word of the day at the 212th Church of the Brethren Annual Conference June 30-July 5 in Orlando, Fla.

The conference, which drew a total of 3,509 registered attendees to the cavernous Orange County Convention Center, was sedate and cheerful as Brethren steered clear of controversy. In business sessions, delegates recognized two organizations —Association of Brethren Caregivers and On Earth Peace Assembly — as "fully reportable and accountable" to Annual Conference, thereby establishing a more decentralized but collaborative style of organizing denominational affairs.

Judy Mills Reimer was installed as executive director of the General Board. On the day after Conference, Reimer was on the job addressing her new duties at General Offices in Elgin, Ill.

In other business, the Conference delegates:

- Gave Brethren Benefit Trust authority to offer expanded financial services, including mutual funds, to church members.
- Approved a paper on "World Mission Philosophy and Global Church Mission Structure," which outlines procedures for establishing and equipping new overseas mission projects.
- Returned without action a query requesting study of medical uses of fetal tissue.
- Accepted a report on Free Ministry and adopted its statement on Plural Non-Salaried Ministry.
- Approved a paper reaffirming "The New Testament as Our Rule of Faith and Practice."
- Assigned three committees to study queries and report back to Annual Conference in the future. Study committees were assigned to research Congregational Structure, Review of Process for Calling Denominational Leadership, and Caring for the Poor.

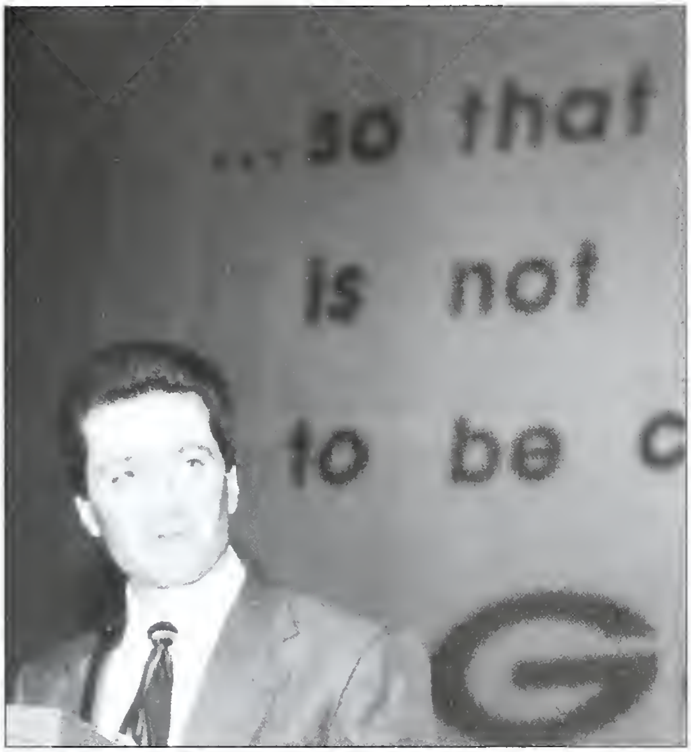


PHOTOS BY
Phil Grout

STORY BY
Fletcher F. Farrar

Top photo: An Annual Conference protest organized by Christian Peacemaker Teams asks the Disney Corporation to pay fair wages to Haitian workers who sew Disney clothing. **Second row, left:** In the General Board Live Report, Judy Mills Reimer, Amanda Sgro, and Roy Stern make the best of their situation on a stuck elevator. Right: Judy Mills Reimer takes charge as the General Board's new executive director. **Third row:** On an elevator together for the entertaining General Board Live Report were, from left, Judy Mills Reimer; Amanda Sgro of Sebring, Fla.; Roy Stern, pastor of Lorida, Fla. congregation; Bonnie Kesselring; Jerel Eller, Sebring, Fla.; and Amanda Osborn, Sebring, Fla.

so that God
not ashamed
be called our
God



Top photo: "The land is sold!" reported Earle Fike, Jr., third from right, president of the Bethany Theological Seminary board during Bethany's report to Conference. Sale of the seminary's former campus in Oak Brook, Ill. enabled the seminary to pay off the $4 million loan made to it by Brethren Benefit Trust for the seminary's relocation to Richmond, Ind. Here Wil Nolen, left, president of Brethren Benefit Trust, and John Flora, BBT board chair, present a framed copy of loan papers marked "Paid in full" to Fike and Eugene Roop, president of Bethany. **Bottom left:** Chris Bowman, chair of the General Board, said in his report: "This was a tough year! We tried to be faithful. Lots of folks put pressure on us to follow their own vision of the church—to go left or right or backwards—but the Annual Conference elected us and, with prayer and consensus, we had to stay faithful to what we felt was right, despite the maneuverings of others." **Bottom right:** Don Tharpe of Midland, Va., addresses an item of business from the Conference floor.

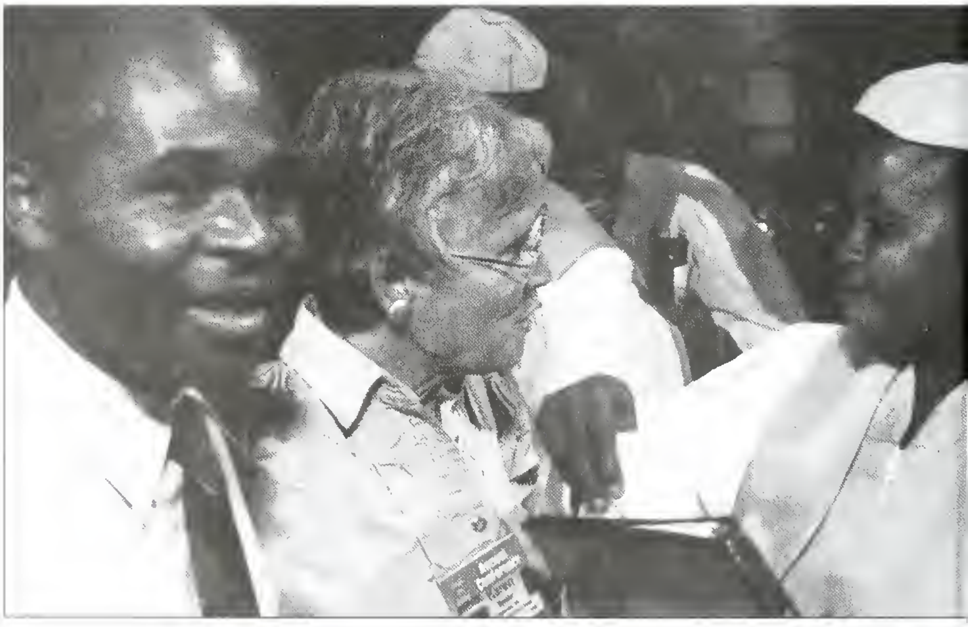
People

Annual Conference is always a time for getting friends together, for relaxed visiting, and formal celebrations. For many who attend Conference each year, it is primarily a social gathering, interrupted only occasionally by business, worship, and sleep.

Among the highlights this year:

- Twenty-six golfers played in the annual Brethren Benefit Trust golf outing at the International Golf Club in Orlando. After a tie-breaking playoff, first place went to Todd Reish, Dan Poole, Dave Rogers, and Jean Fike.
- Jay Gibble was honored upon his retirement as executive director of the Association of Brethren Caregivers, after 17 years of work with the ministry. "It's been a great joy," said Gibble, who continues as a part-time ABC staff member, working with deacon ministries and the Lafiya program.
- The annual 5K run/walk, sponsored by the Outdoor Ministries Association, drew a crowd of energetic early-risers. First and second place winners in the men's run were Fernando Coronado and Jerry Crouse. Deb Morris and Rachel Long led the women. In the walking division, Dave Fouts won for the men and Becki Ball-Miller won for the women.
- Service took first place for 38 Brethren conferencegoers who contributed a combined 57 volunteer days assisting Project LOVE by repairing houses in nearby Winter Garden. The houses had been damaged by storms that swept through central Florida in February.

In a separate response to disaster, Brethren at Conference donated more than $13,000 for the Red Cross to help victims of Florida wildfires.



Top photo: Dorotha Fry Mason of N. Manchester, Ind., and longtime friend Elsie Eicher of Harrisonburg, Va., share family photos. **Middle:** Magician Barry Sink pulls a rabbit out of a hat during children's time, led by worship leader Cindy Barnum-Steggerda. **Below:** Ludovic St. Fleur, pastor of Eglise des Freres Haitiens, Miami, Fla., with Karen Carter of Daleville, Va., greeting members of the Haitian church choir, which performed for Tuesday evening's worship service.

Top: Emily Barker, with her grandmother, Violet Miller, a member of Hope Church of the Brethren, Freeport, Mich. **Middle:** Friends get together. From left: Byrl Shaver, pastor, Longmeadow Church of the Brethren, Hagerstown, Md.; Manny Diaz of Lake Charles, La., a Congregational Life Team staff member and Southern Plains district executive; and Don Self , associate pastor, Lake Charles (La.) Community Church of the Brethren. **Bottom:** John Wenger of Anderson, Ind., a clinical psychologist, leads a panel discussion in an insight session on mental health issues.

Worship

"Faithfulness" was the common theme explored by each of the worship preachers at Annual Conference. A quotation from each:

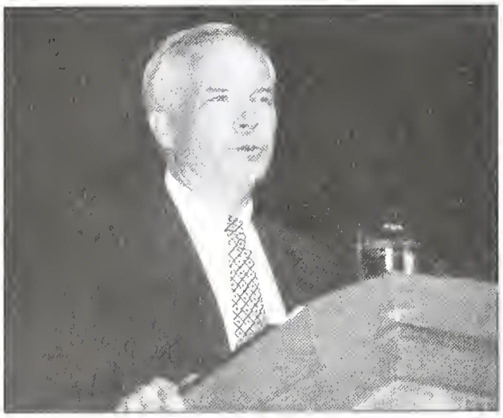
William Willimon, dean of the chapel and professor of Christian ministry, Duke University, Durham, N.C., was Tuesday night's speaker: "The Bible is a book about the imagination of God. It's a book meant to stoke, to fund, to kindle the imagination of the church. That's how I want you to think of the Church of the Brethren, as a people produced by the imagination of God, as a people with faithful imagination."

Elaine Sollenberger, Annual Conference moderator, of Everett, Pa., spoke Wednesday: "Somehow we need to find the grace to value those things we have in common as well as those we do not. . . . At this time in our lives, one of the things we need most is to find ways, or the way, to hold this body, the Church of the Brethren, together during a time of some uncertainty and some lack of clarity about who we are."

Fred Swartz, pastor of Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren, preached Thursday evening: "Often what is required of us is a real surprise, what we least expect. For example, maybe we need to give up some of our obstinacy toward others' views in order for the church to make some headway toward unity and witness for Christ. Maybe we need to give up some of our social prejudice so that Christ's love for all people can shine through."

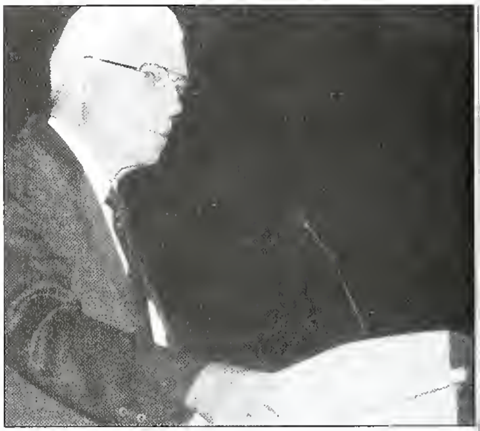
Duane Ramsey, former moderator and recently retired pastor of Washington City Church of the Brethren, Washington, D.C., spoke Friday evening: "I have never found it easy to walk and talk with God. Any serious commitment to follow Christ is not easy."

Donna Forbes Steiner of Landisville, Pa., associate district executive of Atlantic Northeast District, spoke Saturday evening: "The nature of God's love is inclusion of


William Willimon

Elaine Sollenberger

Fred Swartz


Duane Ramsey

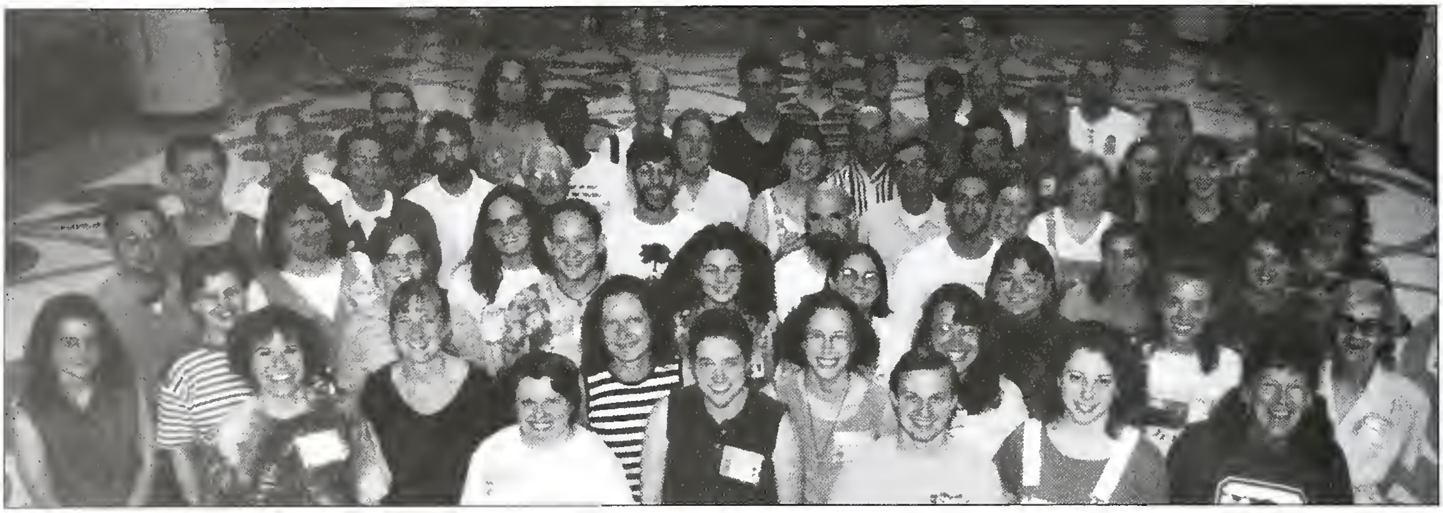
Donna Forbes Steiner

Robert Alley

all persons. No area, no people, no group is separated from God's mercy. Whatever or whomever contributes to excluding another from the Christian community works at cross-purposes with God's redemptive intention."

Robert Alley, pastor of Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren, was the Sunday morning preacher: "This week, we have listened to words of faithfulness . . . . Now as we prepare to leave Annual Conference, the challenge for us is to go aware of God's faithfulness to us and be unashamed to be called God's people! Remember who goes with us!"

Top: A human tableau, called a "living banner," was presented at the beginning of each night's worship. Here, representing different stages in life, from a youth being baptized to a seminary graduate living a life of faithfulness are (from left): Joel Kline, Jill Kline (kneeling), Liz Bidgood-Enders, Eugene Roop, and Cathy Folk. **Second row left:** Jimmy Ross, pastor of the Lititz, Pa. congregation, leads singing. Ross, who had been elected to serve this year as moderator but had to resign a year ago for health reasons, came to Conference demonstrating that he has been restored to good health. **Second row right:** Belita Mitchell, a member of Imperial Heights Church of the Brethren, Los Angeles, Calif., served as Thursday evening worship leader. **Third:** Janelle Flory (left), a freshman at McPherson College, and Kendra Flory, a junior at Bridgewater College, dazzle conference goers with a handbell duet. The sisters, from McPherson, Kan., are daughters of Lowell Flory, 1999 Annual Conference moderator. **Bottom:** Noelle Ballinger performs ballet to the music of "The Lord's Prayer."



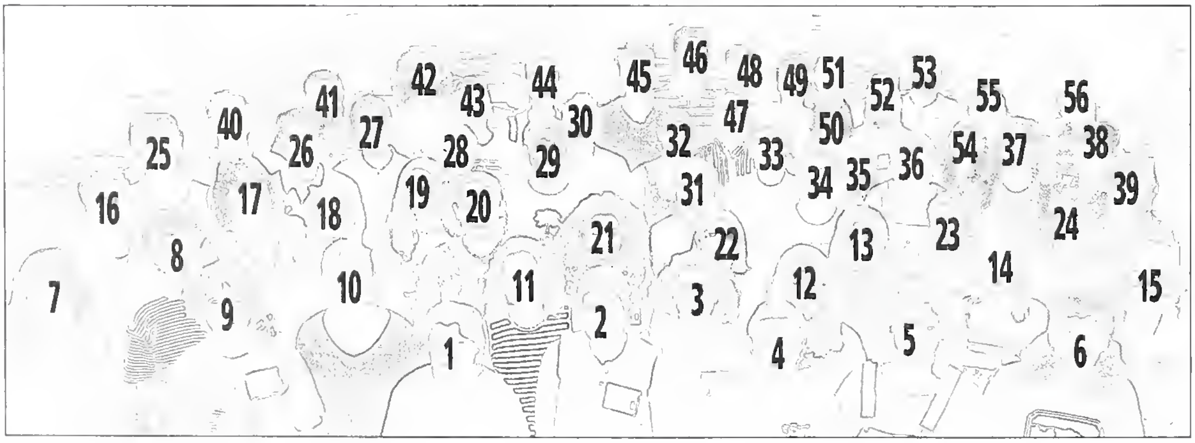
GLOBAL SNAPSHOT

The world comes together at Orlando

There was not a more inspirational moment at Annual Conference than when the Brethren Volunteer Service volunteers came forward one by one to announce their name, project, and location. From 10 countries and 13 states they came, 62 volunteers in all, each serving God under the Brethren banner. For this time it seemed the church had indeed been faithful to the command, "Go ye therefore into all the world . . . ."

As part of the BVS 50th anniversary celebration, current volunteers from around the globe had traveled to Conference; most of them had their trips made possible by the gift of an anonymous donor.

1. Laura Stepp, Pesticide Action Network, San Francisco, Calif.; **2.** Mimi Copp, teacher, Kulp Bible College, Mubi, Nigeria; **3.**Jessica Lehman, Northern Ireland Children's Holiday Scheme, Belfast, Northern Ireland; **4.** Matt Stauffer, assistant to BVS orientation, Elgin, Ill.; **5.** Diane Dubble, Community Mediation Center, Harrisonburg, Va.; **6.** Jean Morgan, Women's Aid, Belfast, Northern Ireland; **7.** Nancy Zook, Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, London, England; **8.** Mary Ann Albert, World Friendship Center, Hiroshima, Japan; **9.** Carla Kilgore, Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Need, Frederick, Md.; **10.** Mandy Kreps, peace consultant of Shenandoah District, Harrisonburg, Va.; **11.** Anna Szymaska, Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.; **12.** Mary Miller, Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.; **13.** Jenn Brown, National-Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, Washington, D.C.; **14.** Andrea Wells, Café Joshua, West Palm Beach, Fla.; **15.** Ruth Hess, Camp Bethel, Fincastle,Va.; **16**. Robert Stiles, San Antonio Catholic Worker House, San Antonio, Texas; **17.** Kryss Chupp, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Chicago, Ill.; **18.** Heather Nolen, Church of the Brethren Washington Office, Washington, D.C.; **19.** Tina Rieman, assistant to the director of Volunteer Service Ministries, Elgin, Ill.; **20.** Cheri Rieman, San Antonio Catholic Worker House, San Antonio, Texas; **21.** Megan Blinn, L'Arche Community, Republic of Ireland; **22.** Melissa Collett, World Wide Web administrator, Elgin, Ill.; **23.** Karin Davidson, program assistant to Brethren Witness Office, Elgin, Ill.; **24.** Jen Flory, Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Need, Frederick, Md.; **25.** Chip Wood, Camp Myrtlewood, Myrtlepoint, Ore.; **26.** Aaron Durnbaugh, Northern Ireland Children's Holiday Scheme, Belfast, Northern Ireland; **27.** Curtis Bryant, Trees For Life, Wichita, Kan.; **28.** Charles Albert, World Friendship Center, Hiroshima, Japan; **29.** Jeffrey Faus, Trees For Life, Wichita, Kan.; **30.** Travis Reich, Washington City Church of the Brethren Soup Kitchen, Washington, D.C.; **31.** Ean Frank, San Antonio, Metropolitan Ministry, San Antonio, Texas; **32.** Bekah Rieke, Trees For Life, Wichita, Kan.; **33.** Tom Benevento, Trees For Life, Guatemala; **34.** Dennis Kingery, teacher, Hillcrest School, Jos, Nigeria; **35.** Cary Jossart, Kilcranny House, Coleraine, Northern Ireland; **36.** Sarah Shreckhise, Casa de Esperanza de los Ninos, Houston, Texas; **37.** Jenny Stover, Café 458, Atlanta, Ga.; **38.** Brian Yoder, National Youth Conference coordinator, Elgin, Ill.; **39.** Megan Joseph, Casa de Esperanza de los Ninos, Houston, Texas; **40.** Costa Nicolaidis, Church of the Brethren Washington Office, Washington, D.C.; **41.** Torin Eikenberry, Su Casa Catholic Worker House, Chicago, Ill., **42.** Bryan Wave, Interfaith House, Chicago, Ill.; **43.** Daniel Opoku, National Farm Worker Ministry, Benson, North Carolina; **44.** Jeff Bibler, Trees for Life, India; **45.** Stephan Kruft, Tri-City Homeless Coalition, Fremont, Calif.; **46.** Scott Shively, Kilcranny House, Coleraine, Northern Ireland; **47.** Ralf Ziegler, EIRENE Organization, Neuwied, Germany; **48.** Andreas Tillmann, Washington City Church of the Brethren Soup Kitchen, Washington, D.C.; **49.** Chris Weller, Balkan Peace Team, Split, Croatia; **50.** Nathan Backus, Gould Farm, Monterey, Mass.; **51.** Andrew Taylor, Proyecto Libertad, Harlingen, Texas; **52.** Todd Reish, coordinator of BVS Orientation (full-time staff), Elgin, Ill.; **53.** Michael McCarthy, Proyecto Libertad, Harlingen,Texas; **54.** Elaine Campbell, Multi-Cultural Resource Centre, Belfast, Northern Ireland; **55.** Kristin Flory, BVS Europe coordinator (full-time staff), Geneva, Switzerland; **56.** Dan McFadden, director of Volunteer Service Ministries/BVS (full-time staff), Elgin, Ill.



Alma Long of Ada, Ohio, who played a key role in the founding of BVS in 1948, spoke at the 50th anniversary dinner.

"The founding of BVS at the 1948 Annual Conference was the most exciting event of my life."

"You can tackle a lot of problems if you know that somebody somewhere loves you."

"It's the chain reaction of the spirit—how one life touches another life—that gets the job done."

"BVS wound me up for life."

BVS CHANGES PEOPLE

Celebrating history and hope at the 50th anniversary

More than 400 persons attended the Brethren Volunteer Service 50th anniversary dinner in Orlando. Most of them were current or former BVS volunteers. All agreed that BVS not only changes the world, but changes the people who enter the program, too.

Several former volunteers were recognized from the first official BVS unit in 1948, and from volunteer projects before that. Volunteers from each decade were then asked to stand. When the crowd was asked how many had met their spouse through BVS, dozens of hands were raised.

Bob Gross, a former volunteer from N. Manchester, Ind., told the audience that BVS deepens a person's values permanently. "BVS volunteers are changed in a way that they don't quite fit into the world anymore," Gross said. He suggested networking among former volunteers so that BVSers "can stay ruined for life."

Kristin Flory, the coordinator of Brethren Volunteer Service in Europe, came to Annual Conference from her base in Geneva, Switzerland, where she has been supervising BVSers for the past ten years. She now has charge of about 25 volunteers.

Preferring to work quietly behind the scenes, Flory reluctantly agreed to be interviewed in Orlando about changes she has seen over the years.

She said it continues to be a challenge to find the right kind of people, and enough of them, to fill the need. In Europe alone, she said, she knows of 10 or 12 organizations which are "desperately" seeking volunteers. Recent cutbacks in BVS recruitment personnel contribute to the problem.

"The volunteers are more honest about what they want to get out of their BVS service," she said. While in the past participants said they were motivated only by their desire to serve, today the motivation is mixed. "There is an increased consciousness that this is part of their education," Flory said. Though less than half of the volunteers are members of the Church of the Brethren, Brethren values are emphasized. "Some are clear that they are living out of their faith," Flory said.

Regardless of their motives for coming into BVS, the volunteers always leave the program changed by it. "They are changed by seeing a different way of approaching problems. They get another cultural perspective. It's inevitable that they're going to see things differently than when they came."

"We're all going to be changed and challenged," Flory said, offering a glimpse into her own motivation. Some volunteers' lives take on a whole new perspective, oriented to peace and justice for the poor. "I'm thrilled when that happens."

Dan McFadden, who heads BVS as director of Volunteer Service Ministries for the General Board, said currently there are 79 open BVS positions with only 25 volunteers currently available to fill them. "We need volunteers," he said.

Bob Gross told the dinner audience he'd like to see BVS get more involved in Brethren-initiated group projects, rather than just being a clearinghouse to recruit volunteers for existing projects. "We need to be washing the feet of the world," he said. "But we need to be challenging oppression too."

Alma Long of Ada, Ohio, who regaled the dinner crowd with tales from the beginnings of BVS 50 years ago, ended her presentation with a look toward the future. "God isn't done with BVS yet," she said. "There lies the hope. And there lies the challenge."

The Young

Children and youth at Conference learned about their faith, made new friends, performed service work, and shared their talents. The young at Annual Conference are not only the church's future, they are its present vitality.

Dawn Hanes, left, of Union, Ohio, Drew Jones of Durham, N.C., and Amy Rhoades of Dalevile, Va., get their heads together at senior high youth activities.

Editor's Note: This photo is by Jessica Ramirez of Elkhart, Ind., who will be a high school senior this fall. She is considering a career in photography.

Bethany Theological Seminary colleagues and friends performed a spirited Godspell for conferencegoers Saturday night. Pictured, from left, are: Holly Hathaway, John Harvey, Barb Sayler, Shad Scarrette, Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, Liz Bidgood-Enders, Jim Bowyer, and Johnny Barr.

Jason and Heidi Fishburn perform during a senior high concert.

Mycal Gresh of New Plains, Pa. pours her heart into children's rhythm band performance . . .

. . . but once off stage she succumbs in the arms of her father, Pastor Ken Gresh.

op: Bitrus Bdlia, general secretary of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, delivers greetings in Orlando, with Bitrus Tizhe, EYN resident, and Merv Keeney, director of Global Mission Partnerships. Second: Bdlia, left, and Tizhe enjoy American food Orlando. **Bottom photo:** Kim Joo, a consultant for several Brethren relief initiatives in famine-gripped North Korea, rived in Orlando direct from her latest visit to the Asian nation. She discusses the situation in North Korea with Brethren astor Dan Kim, left, and General Board vice chair, Lori Sollenberger Knepp. Joo hosted Knepp on a February visit to orth Korea.

Guests

They could never imagine a rule limiting the length of speeches at their Annual Conference, or limiting a delegate to only one speech on a particular subject. In Africa, speeches go on and on.

Despite differences in microphone decorum, guests from Nigeria at Annual Conference found much in common with their US church partners. The guests were the two top leaders of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN), the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. They are Bitrus Bdlia, general secretary, and Bitrus Tizhe, president.

They came as part of the celebration of 75 years of partnership between the US Church of the Brethren and the Nigerian church. Some 80 Brethren who have served in Nigeria or visited there joined the visitors on stage during a special presentation, and many others with special ties to the African church greeted the visitors at a reception.

The church leaders' visit to Orlando followed meetings at Church of the Brethren offices in Elgin, Ill. This was the "biennial consultation" between Nigerian church leaders and their church partners, which include the Basel Mission of Basel, Switzerland, in addition to the Church of the Brethren.

These visitors would go home to a land in political turmoil over leadership struggles. Nigeria's political problems affect the EYN church primarily through the economic problems resulting from government corruption. Problems between Christians and Muslims are intensifying as Muslim fundamentalism spreads.

Despite these problems, or because of them, EYN is growing so rapidly it is experiencing a leadership shortage. There are full-time pastors for only a third of the 356 congregations.

Tizhe said service is key to the church's evangelism in Nigeria. A rural development program digs wells even in Muslim areas as a demonstration of Christian love. He recited a favored saying: "If I go empty-handed, what will my Lord say?"

New Leadership

The new executive director of the General Board, Judy Mills Reimer, received a standing ovation as she was officially installed at the conclusion of Thursday morning's General Board Live Report. Family, friends, and church officials surrounded Reimer as she took her vows from Chris Bowman, chairman of the General Board, and received anointing with oil and laying on of hands.

Reimer gave all in attendance a bookmark bearing the words of Ephesians 4:3 — "Make it your aim to be at one in the Spirit and you will be bound together in peace." — and led the body in reading the passage in response. "It is my sincere hope, friends," Reimer said, "that we will continue on the journey and that we would truly be about God's business."

Lowell Flory, a college professor and attorney from McPherson, Kan., assumed the position of Annual Conference moderator, the highest elected office in the Church of the Brethren, after serving one year as moderator-elect.

Emily Metzger Mumma, pastor of Hollidaysburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, was elected moderator-elect. She will assume the position of moderator next July, and will preside over the 214th Annual Conference in 2000. Mumma, of Duncansville, Pa., has served the church in numerous

Top: Judy Mills Reimer, new executive director of the General Board. **Second:** Reimer being anointed with oil by Chris Bowman, chair of the General Board. **Bottom:** Laying on hands, from left, are: Chris Bowman; Troy Reimer, son, of Roanoke, Va.; George Reimer; Judy Mills Reimer; David Shumate, Virlina district executive; and Jane Mills, sister, of Louisville, Ky.

op: Tracy Wenger Sadd, left of Manheim, Pa., was elected vice chair of the General Board and Mary Jo Flory-Steury, of ettering, Ohio, was elected chair. **Middle:** Kneeling during Sunday's consecration service are Lowell Flory, the new modrator, and Emily Metzger Mumma, moderator-elect. Standing, from left, are Barbara Flory, Cathy Huffman, Elaine ollenberger, Berwyn Oltman, and Luke Mumma. **Below:** Lowell Flory says thanks and farewell to departing moderator aine Sollenberger, with whom he has served for the past year.

leadership positions on the congregational, district, and denominational levels.

Among other election results:

Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee: Paul Roth, Broadway, Va.

General Board: At-large—R. Jan Thompson, Mesa, Ariz. Atlantic Southeast—Merle Crouse, St. Cloud, Fla. Missouri/Arkansas—Cynthia Loper Sanders, Cabool, Mo. Southern Pennsylvania—Warren Eshbach, Thomasville, Pa.

Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Advisory Committee: Eunice Erb Culp, Goshen, Ind.

Committee on Interchurch Relations: James Beckwith, Dayton, Va.

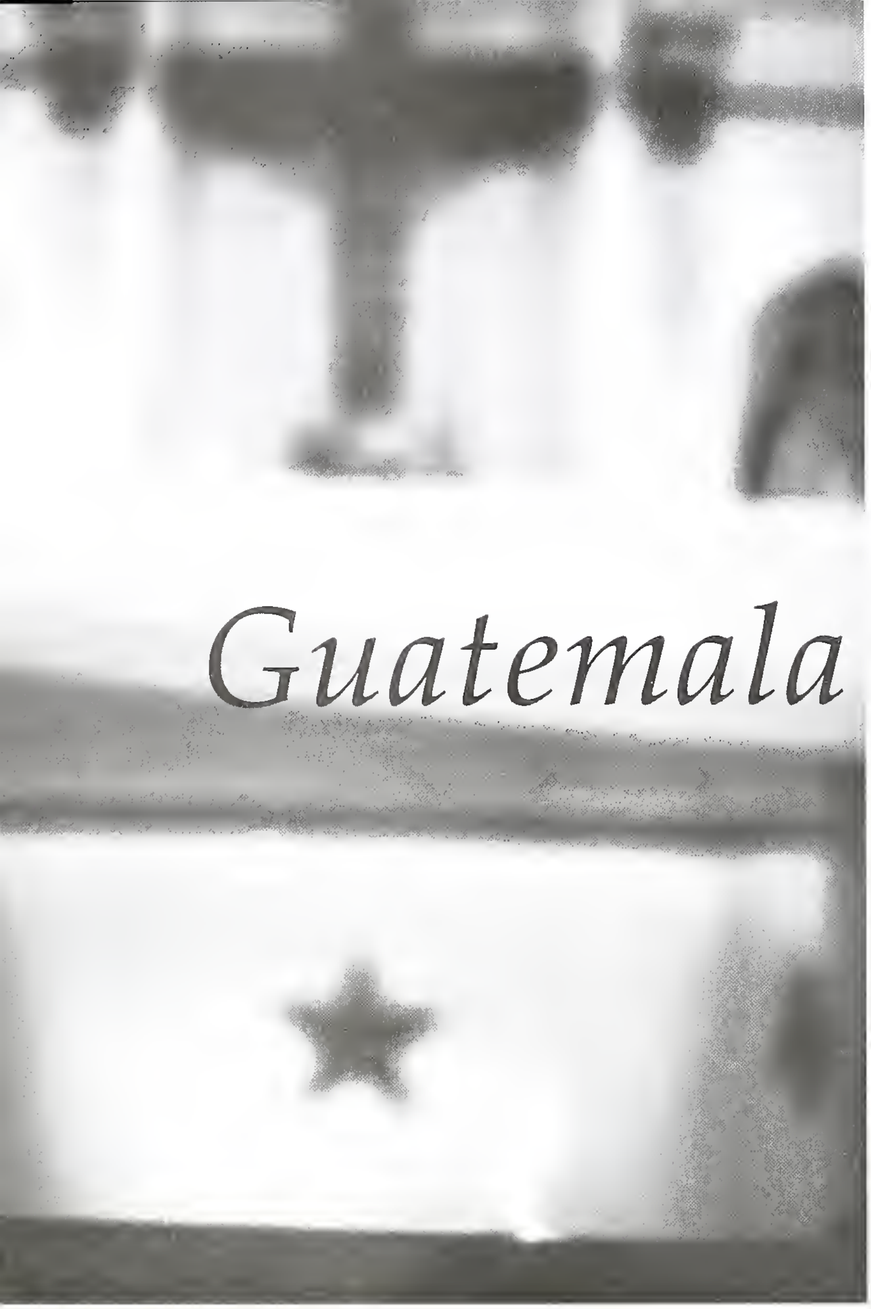
Bethany Theological Seminary electors: Representing the laity—Peggy Mangus Yoder, Huntingdon, Pa. Representing the ministry—Susan Stern Boyer, North Manchester, Ind.

The General Board elected Mary Jo Flory-Steury, pastor of the Prince of Peace congregation, Kettering, Ohio, as its new chair. Tracy Wenger Sadd of Manheim, Pa., was elected vice-chair. Other executive committee members are Phyllis Davis, Ernest Bolz, Stafford Frederick, and Bill Eberly.

Ann Quay of the La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren was introduced as new chair of Brethren Benefit Trust. Ray Donadio was elected vice-chair and is joined by new board members Lamar Gibble and Richard Pogue. Cheryl Ottemoeller Ingold was re-elected by Conference delegates.

The Association of Brethren Caregivers has chosen Marilyn Lerch Scott as chair-elect to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Judy Mills Reimer. New ABC board members elected to a three-year term were Connie Burk Davis, Ralph McFadden, Sue Moore, and Bentley Peters.

Janice Ruhl and Mark Baeverstad were confirmed as members of the Bethany Theological Seminary board of trustees. Donna Ritchey Martin of Mt. Morris, Ill., was elected to the officers committee of the Ministers Association.



Guatemala heartaches

War-weary people gather the courage to tell their stories

Photos and story by
David Radcliff

Guatemala is one of the most beautiful places on God's earth. Lush forests, volcanic soils, monuments to ancient civilizations. Gracious and generous people dressed in every color of the rainbow. Yet there has been no pot of gold at the end of this rainbow in recent years; for the past three and a half decades a brutal civil war has drained the colors of life from this Central American nation.

The numbers themselves command our attention: over these past 35 years there were 150,000 killed, another 50,000 disappeared, 200,000 orphans, 40,000 widows, 1 million refugees—and all this in a country about the size of Virginia with a total population of only 6 million people. The victims of this violence were mostly poor, mostly rural, mostly indigenous—although beyond that the destruction was coldly impartial.

Children were killed along with their parents, sometimes wrenched from their mothers' wombs. In half of the over 400 recorded massacres, women as well as men were killed. Men were forced to watch their wives being violated by groups of soldiers. Ninety percent of the victims were civilians, belonging neither to the government nor guerilla forces. Everyone cowered under a pale of fear. Afraid to see, afraid to talk, afraid to know, afraid to live.

One priest told our group a story to illustrate the curtain of fear that hung over many communities. In a certain community, a man had been murdered. The priest only knew about this from cryptic comments made by villagers. "You see," the priest explained, "no one wanted to admit that they knew anything about this. Even though it would have been common knowledge that the paramilitary forces were responsible, the people were afraid that they would be blamed for the killing."

Finally someone indicated that perhaps the lake near the village could be the site of the crime. The priest spent all of the next morning searching for the body. After combing the lake shore for hours, a man came by driving his cattle. "Pastor, do you have anything for fear," he asked, as one would ask for a dose of medicine. By his ashen appearance and shaken manner, the priest suspected he had stumbled upon the body. He retraced the tracks of the cattle until he came to a wooded area, just in time to see a small dog come out of the forest carrying a human arm in its mouth.

How does a nation overcome such a legacy? Even after the signing of an historic peace accord in September 1996, the fear—and the accompanying silence—remained. This was in part due to the fact that many of the conditions that gave rise to the conflict still remain. "The social and economic problems that provoked the conflict in the past—the poverty, the lack of land, the oppression of indigenous people and women—are still present, and getting worse," according to Guatemalan human rights advocate Frank LaRue. "And there is the feeling that the military can make a move and set us back 20 years. The past can happen again. That is why REMHI is so important."

Indeed, REMHI was why I had come to Guatemala in April along with a dozen other US church representatives. The Recuperation of Historic Memory project (REMHI is the Spanish acronym) was an attempt sponsored by the Catholic church to both deal with the past by giving people the opportunity to speak of what they had seen, heard, and experienced, and to build for the future, by taking a step toward national reconciliation. In order to move into a more peaceful future, the trauma of the past needed to be recognized and addressed. REMHI was to be presented on Friday, April 24 to the nation at a special ceremony in the cathedral in Guatemala City, an event our delegation had been invited to witness.

Indeed the people spoke, for the first time in decades. Over 6,500 people came forward over the course of two years to tell their personal and community horror stories. These testimonies were collected by some 600 "animators"—common people trained to interview their neighbors. The results bore out what everyone had suspected. While there were atrocities committed by every party to the conflict, the vast majority, over 80 percent, were carried out by government forces.

Here is case #3164. San Cristobal Verapaz, Alta Verapaz, 1982:

Without asking any questions, the soldiers tied up everyone inside the house. They poured gasoline on the house and set it on fire. Everyone inside died in the fire, including a two-year-old child. My mother, sister, and brother-in-law died along with their three children.

The purpose of REMHI was not to make accusations or to be

Families living in the village of Nuevo Mexico, a sister community in the Church of the Brethren's Guatemalan Accompaniment program, each have their own REMHI-like stories. Translation and comments are provided by Melinda Van Slyke, Brethren-supported "accompanier." Melinda will finish her one-year stay in Nuevo Mexico this fall.

Modesta

"We lived in the Ixcan region when the repression started. They burned our house—they burned everything we had. With machetes they cut down our trees. First we went into the jungle, because we didn't want to die. We were just like animals. The army would come at night and kill anyone they saw. And so we left for Mexico. We walked for 22 days. Along the way, we ate anything we could find—weeds, leaves. And now we're here, and they want each family to pay a huge sum for this land. It hasn't rained for months, we can't plant, and we're running out of food. The government built us a basketball court. Can we eat a basketball court?! It was a completely ridiculous project. I have a very painful abscessed tooth, but I cannot afford treatment. Before, we were caught between the army and the guerillas; now it's the robbers. The former soldiers and guerillas are now the bandits. Who knows what we're going to do? It's very sad."

confrontational. This was evident at the April 25 presentation. "Speaker after speaker stressed the pastoral focus of the work, primarily the idea that speaking the truth was necessary for the mental health, healing, and reconciliation of the country," noted longtime Guatemala activist Kathy Ogle, of the US-based Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean.

The speaker that afternoon who garnered the most robust applause was bishop Juan Gerardi. Although he had just recently been in charge of the REMHI project, Gerardi had once been bishop of the Quiche region, the area in which the repression had been the most severe. At one point in the early 1980s, he had to close down his parish due to the assassination of so many priests. Threats were made on his own life, sending him into exile for several years.

I first met the bishop soon after that period, a large man with dark hair and sharp features, during a visit to Guatemala in 1986. His hair has grayed over the years, but his commitment to Guatemala's marginalized people and to living out the gospel in this difficult situation has not lessened.

When asked recently if he had forgiven the military officials who slaughtered the pastors of his parish and tried to kill him, Gerardi easily and confidently answered, "Yes." He quickly added, "It's difficult, I know. Forgiving doesn't mean forgetting the monstrosities of that time. But if God forgives someone, then that person has to forgive others, although at times we remember and that memory makes us angry."

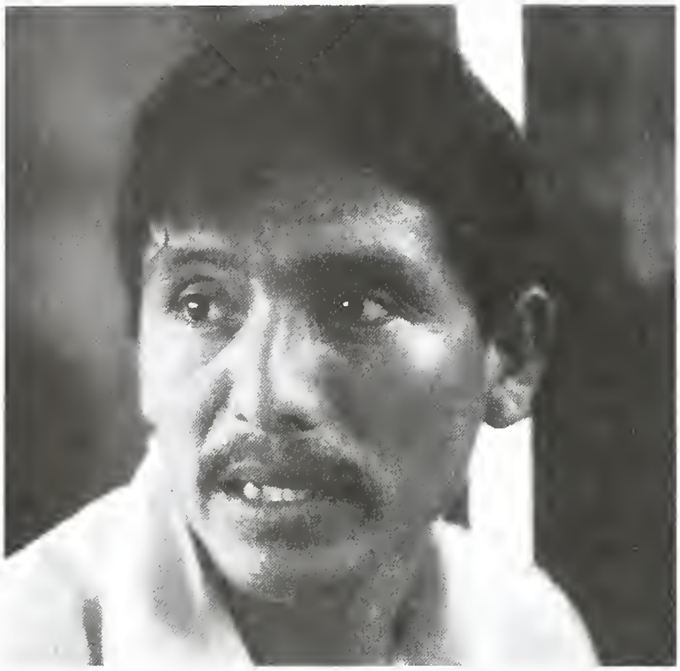
During his speech on April 24, Gerardi said, "We want to contribute to the building of a country different from the one we have now. For that reason we are recovering the memory of our people. This path has been and continues to be full of risks, but the construction of the reign of God has risks and can only be built by those who have the strength to confront those risks."

On April 26, two days after I saw him last, Gerardi lay dead in the garage of his home, slain by an assailant wielding a cement block. While no one has yet been convicted of the assassination, most suspect it was carried out by the same elements whose identity had begun to be unmasked by REMHI. So used to acting under the cover of fear-induced darkness in carrying out their dirty deeds, these same forces would likely strike back when suddenly exposed to the light of day. And what better target than Gerardi? Strike the shepherd, silence the lambs.

Other acts of intimidation were unleashed in the weeks following REMHI, including death threats delivered and carried out. Indeed, many of the people with whom our group had met had expressed concern over the tenuous state of the nation in the wake of the peace accords, even as they rejoiced at the new "space" to speak up and speak out.

But perhaps it is too late for even a heinous act like the murder of the bishop to carry the weight it might have only several years ago. Due both to REMHI and to newfound political openness, the lid of repression is not so firmly in place anymore. Once rolled away from the tomb, perhaps the stone of silence and fear will not be rolled back. For the first time in decades the voices of countless Guatemalans have been heard, and their painful yet healing words are there for all to see in REMHI—black and white and red all over.

Many challenges for Guatemalans remain. Indigenous people still need respect for their rights and access to land. Women, thousands of whom must now head their families in the



Tomas

"My two brothers and my wife's mother were killed in massacres by the army. Once when my wife was walking with her father to the fields, the soldiers stopped them. 'Why do you have all these tortillas? Are you feeding the guerillas?' Of course they were only for them to eat for lunch that day, but the soldiers didn't believe them. We eventually had to flee to Mexico. And after all these years we have returned, and to the government, the peace accords are just paper. They don't follow them. Conditions are worse than they were before; they provided us with this land, but now want to make us pay over Q80 million (over $1 million) for it, and there is no way for us to raise the money to pay for it."

absence of murdered husbands, need to be assured of equal treatment and full respect. A judicial system used to offering impunity must instead present impartiality. In a nation where annual per capita health care expenditures are under $10 and many live in abject poverty, means must be found to improve the lives of Guatemala's citizens. The military and economic structures that often ruled by force in the past are still in evidence, and they must be put in their proper place in national life.

The United States has at best a checkered past in Guatemala. Indeed, the beginning of the trauma of the past decades can be traced to a US-orchestrated overthrow of the elected Guatemalan government in 1954. Since then, the US has often overlooked gross governmental misconduct in deference to having a "strategic partner" in a volatile region. We must now encourage our government to use its influence to foster peace and justice in Guatemala, including a thorough investigation of the death of Bishop Gerardi.

As a church, we must continue to stand alongside the people of Guatemala as they face the truth of their past, and seek a peace for tomorrow. The Partners in Accompaniment program, connecting Brethren congregations with Guatemalan communities of returned refugees, gives a sense of solidarity and provides protection of human rights. Visiting Brethren delegations sponsored by the Brethren Witness and Global Mission Partnerships offices will continue to let Guatemalans know that they are not forgotten, and will help us understand the strength as well as the struggles of these neighbors. And the denomination is currently seeking opportunities to support small-scale development initiatives like those being carried out by Brethren Volunteer Service worker Tom Benevento in the impoverished northeast corner of the country.

As Bishop Gerardi said not long before his death, "Many have blamed the church for pointing out the abuses of the past because we're the ones putting our finger into the wound. We didn't create the problems, we've only shed light on them, and that's what bothers some people. The church is called to reconcile persons. Sure, it's a difficult task, but it's a very appropriate task for the church. And if the church doesn't do it, no one will."

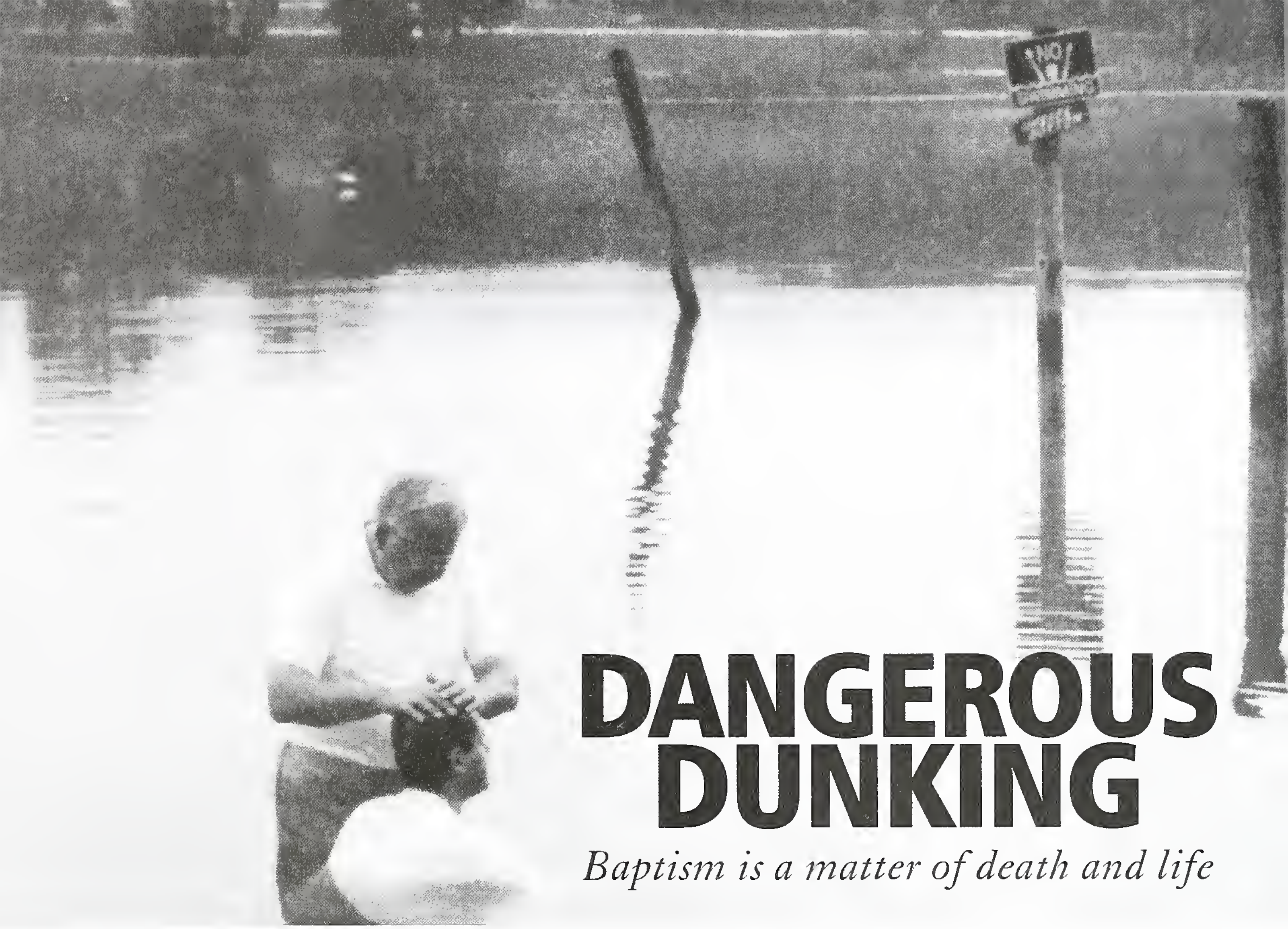
Guatemala—a troubled nation experiencing both the peril and the promise of trying to reclaim its future by recalling its past. Our prayers, our presence, and our compassion go with these neighbors in their risky journey to a better day. M.

David Radcliff is director of the Brethren Witness office of the General Board staff.

Marabel

"I am not sure where I was born. My grandparents fled Guatemala because soldiers frequented their area. They threatened to take their daughters away as wives and their sons off to the army. So my family lived for many years in Mexico. Now that we are back, things are still difficult. We live in this community, but do not own land. So we have no say in community decisions. We are like refugees in a community of refugees. School for my daughter will cost about $6.50 a year after this year. This will make it difficult to keep her enrolled. It is very important for my daughters to go to school—otherwise they will have little choice about how to earn money; all they can do is to be a domestic worker. I only completed the third grade. I was married when I was 14. I made the choice for myself. I thought marrying my husband would change my life. It didn't. My husband is very hard on me. He will not let me teach the children my native language, Cankobal. I have thought about leaving a thousand times, but cannot because of the children."

[Melinda Van Slyke: "He beats her—and not just pushing her around—he really hits her—at least once a month. And once she came home to find him with her best friend. She came running to my house crying."]



DANGEROUS DUNKING

Baptism is a matter of death and life

New Covenant Church of the Brethren, *Gotha, Fla., celebrated a baptism on Christmas Day, 1997. The first Brethren baptismal service in America was on Christmas Day, 1723.*

BY KENNETH L. GIBBLE

Your baptism. What does it mean to you?

My own baptism means more to me the older I get. I value it now far more than when as a boy I walked down the steps of the baptistry in the East Fairview Church of the Brethren and one of our ministers, Willis Stehman, immersed me three times in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

There is a sense in which every Christian spends the rest of his or her life discovering what their baptism signifies.

I like what William Willimon has said about baptism: "When you join the Rotary they give you a handshake and a lapel pin. When you join the church we throw you in the water and half drown you." Let's face it, if somebody who didn't know anything about the Christian faith ever walked into our church when we were baptizing someone, they would think we were all crazy. And really, the whole thing is kind of crazy, isn't it?—pushing a person's head under water three times so they come out soaking wet, hair all mussed up. It's not a very reasonable, sensible thing to do to someone, is it?

It's more than that. It's dangerous. Baptism is a dangerous dunking indeed. Why do I say that?

It's dangerous because it's a kind of dying. Here's how the Apostle Paul described it in Romans: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3).

"Baptized into his death." What did Paul mean by that? I'm not sure, but I think Paul was referring to the fact that baptism signifies dying to our old, self-centered, sinful nature. It means putting to death the attitude of "I've gotta be me" and "I did it my way." That attitude is quite popular these days. It insists that what I think is right and worthwhile and important is the only thing that counts. It declares, "Nobody can tell me what to do." It is the voice of American individualism.

Baptism is dangerous because it means the death of that way of thinking. When you are baptized, doing it your way is replaced by doing it Jesus' way. And that can get you into trouble. The way of Jesus is the way of the cross. Baptism never lets you forget that. Baptism means that your life is no longer your own; now it belongs to the Lord.

Baptism is a dangerous dunking in another way. Baptism means you are adopted into the craziest family you can imagine. Now every family is crazy in its own way, I suppose. There is the colorful uncle who always shows up at the family gatherings with a new car and a new girlfriend. There is the little brother who is such a pest. Maybe there is the mother who drives everyone nuts with her perfectionism, the father who still hasn't learned how to say "I love you" to his kids.

But the family you are adopted into when you are baptized is even crazier. It's the kind of family only God could love. In this family there are holy rollers and Pentecostal shouters and there are monastics who take vows of silence. There are Bible-thumping fundamentalists and there are left-wing liberals. In this worldwide family there are people who speak a multitude of languages, who dress for church in everything from priestly robes to African dashikis to cut-off shorts.

There are Democrats and Republicans. There are black people and white people and people of every shade in between. There are people who believe abortion is a mortal sin and people who believe it is a matter of choice. There are gay people and straight people. There are people who make a career out of military service and there are people who would rather go to jail than wear a military uniform. There are people who will tell you they know with absolute certainty when the Lord will return, and there are people who will tell you they don't have a clue. There are people in this family you probably couldn't stand to be in the same room with for more than five minutes.

But like them or not, agree with them or not, this is the family you become part of when you are baptized. We call it the church. And it's not our church. It's the Lord's church. He gave his life for it and He loves it. He loves each one in it, loves me and loves you and loves the craziest member of it. Paul said it this way:

> *In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:26-28.)*

You see now why I say baptism is a dangerous dunking. It means you are part of this family, the church, this worldwide conglomeration of baptized people known as the body of Christ.

There's another way baptism is dangerous. It's dangerous because it marks you for life. Like all the rest of it, this is God's doing. It's a mystery I don't pretend to understand. But I believe it with all my heart—that when you are baptized, you are changed forever, you will never be the same.

Some people who are baptized drop out of church life. I think I understand why that happens. They get busy with other things. Maybe something that happens in the church offends them or turns them off. Maybe circumstances in their life make them feel ashamed or guilty. And so they gradually stop attending worship. And after awhile, they just don't feel part of the church anymore.

Does that mean they are "lost"? In one sense it does. They are lost to the rest of us because we no longer have the benefit of their ideas, their questions, their tears and laughter. We no longer can see their faces, shake their hands. It is our loss—and their loss too because they no longer have the benefit of our ideas and questions, our tears, our laughter. And because of this lostness, we want them back. We pray for their return and their recommitment.

But are they lost to God? I don't know that. But I do know this—that there is One who is constantly watching for them, like a father waiting for his prodigal son. There is One who is seeking them, like a shepherd who leaves the 99 and goes searching for the lost sheep.

It's dangerous to be baptized because for the rest of your life you will never be able to get away from the Holy One who has named you and claimed you, the Lord to whom you belong. The Lord of life will suffer any pain, any indignity for you, no matter where you go or what you do.

When I was a youngster, the baptisms of our church were held in the creek that ran near our house. One Sunday when several people were baptized, everything went fine until it was the turn of one teenage girl to enter the stream. She was terrified of the swiftly flowing current, and the minister had to gently coax her to go with him and to kneel down in the water. After doing his best to reassure her, he pushed her head under the surface for the first time. She came up out of the water with a shout of terror and headed for the bank. No amount of coaxing could get her back for the second and third dunks. It was kind of funny, really, but nobody laughed. And the impression it made on me at that tender age was that getting baptized is a dangerous business.

Nothing I have seen or heard since then has made me change my mind.

So, if baptism is this scary, this dangerous, why would anyone want to be baptized? The answer is: because it's the best thing you can ever do. You give yourself to the Lord and the Lord gives you new life. Remember what Paul said about being baptized into the death of Jesus? Well, this is the very next thing Paul wrote:

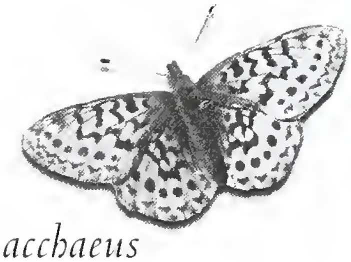
> *Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:4.)*

There's the answer: new life. When you come out of the water, you are new and clean. You are changed forever, by the grace of God. You are no longer your own man or woman, boy or girl. And that is why I say to each person as I help them get to their feet after their baptism: "Now you belong to Jesus."

There is nothing better, no one better, to belong to.

Ken Gibble is pastor of the Chambersburg (Pa.) Church of the Brethren and a frequent contributor to Messenger.

Transformation



When we least expect it, God can turn us around like he did Zacchaeus

BY DUANE GRADY

Zacchaeus was a wee little man
A wee little man was he.
He climbed up in a sycamore tree
For the Lord he wanted to see.

Thus went one of the earliest theological lessons I can remember, sung to a catchy tune. At the time I had no idea I was being taught theology, nor did I much understand the kind of transformation which is at the heart of this story told in Luke 19:1-10.

As children we were told that Zacchaeus, who was short of stature, could teach us something about Jesus' way with the "little people" of the world. This lesson remains a good one as we strive to find our place in a world with big problems and weighty concerns.

When Zacchaeus climbed into that sycamore tree, he intended to catch a glimpse of Jesus. He had an outward focus. Jesus, however, changes the location of Zacchaeus' interest and leads him to look at himself. A key lesson for us today: where you look for change makes all the difference.

The story of Zacchaeus is about transformation. Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector in the town of Jericho, is rich in possessions and poor in spirit. Something sparked an interest in him to see Jesus. Intending to be a spectator, Zacchaeus chooses a safe and secure perch in a sycamore tree far from the crowd and unlikely to be noticed by the prophet passing by. Jesus not only notices but declares, "I must stay at your house today." Jesus in this simple sentence bridges the gap of culture, religion, and custom and begins the process by which Zacchaeus is transformed from a tax collector, one who takes from others, into a generous follower who gives to others.

The most important need in our churches today is for transformation. Too often when we talk about change we are content to tinker. Maybe we will change the place in our worship where the offering is collected. More radical churches might consider learning a new hymn or two. And there is the standard answer to all our problems—changing pastors.

In the Zacchaeus story, Jesus calls us to a transformation of our spirit. This call will stimulate real changes of the heart so that the lives we lead and the way we act in the world will be distinctively different from what we have known.

Does this sound frightening? Intimidating? Is it beyond your reach? Good. The Zacchaeus story will remind us that it is Jesus who does the changing. All Zacchaeus has to do is accept it and move into the new life that Christ has opened up as possible.

From my experience as a pastor of the Northview congregation in Indianapolis, let me share two transforming experiences. One Mother's Day during our worship service's "time for children" I asked each of the children to bring with them a mother from the congregation, not necessarily their own mother. Among our children that day were several whose real mothers never came with them to worship. These children walked to church from our immediate neighborhood and their behavior had been experienced as a challenge during both worship and Sunday school.

One Sunday school teacher had mentioned earlier that she was growing weary of the difficulties in maintaining order in her class and was not sure she wanted to continue teaching.

And then something changed with subtle awesomeness. One of our neighborhood children chose to bring her Sunday school teacher forward. I will never forget the power of seeing that little girl leading her teacher by the hand for the children's time. Nor will I forget witnessing the transformation happening within the teacher who suddenly saw her role no longer limited to that of a teacher. Now she was "mother."

About this same time, our church provided a transforming moment in our ministry with our neighborhood. Years ago the church's back parking lot had developed into a gathering place for unpleasant activities. To prevent cars from driving onto the back parking lot which lies behind our church, a locked cable was strung across the driveway. This barrier allowed the lot to become a safer place to play and ride bikes. So it changed the kind of activity which happened there. A sign was posted which read "Private Property."

Was this sign the message we wanted to send? After several years, a new idea came to one of our neighbors. The old sign was replaced with a new one reading "Children Playing." A transformed message sent a very different signal. Now the purpose of the barrier has less to say about keeping others out and more about being a nurturing, caring place of safety. The distinction has not been lost on our neighbors nor on us.

If we wish to become more complete disciples of Jesus as our church enters a new century, we will need transforming experiences. These will come when we, like Zacchaeus, earnestly seek to see Jesus and then bid welcome when the Christ desires to enter our lives and change our hearts. The power is great. The potential is unlimited.

Duane Grady works part time with the Congregational Life Team in Area 2 and is co-pastor of the Northview congregation in Indianapolis, where he has been since 1989.

The very idea of needing to recruit two teachers for every class was horrifying initially...

Here's what happened to Sunday school

In response to Eugene Lichty's article, "Whatever happened to Sunday school?" [see June MESSENGER], I would advise that it is alive and well and living in Glendale, Ariz.

A few years ago our congregation faced a dilemma similar to that of many of our sister churches around this country—slowly declining membership, especially among young families and children. We routinely struggled with finding volunteers willing to staff children's programming and faced an uncertain future as a congregation almost void of youngsters.

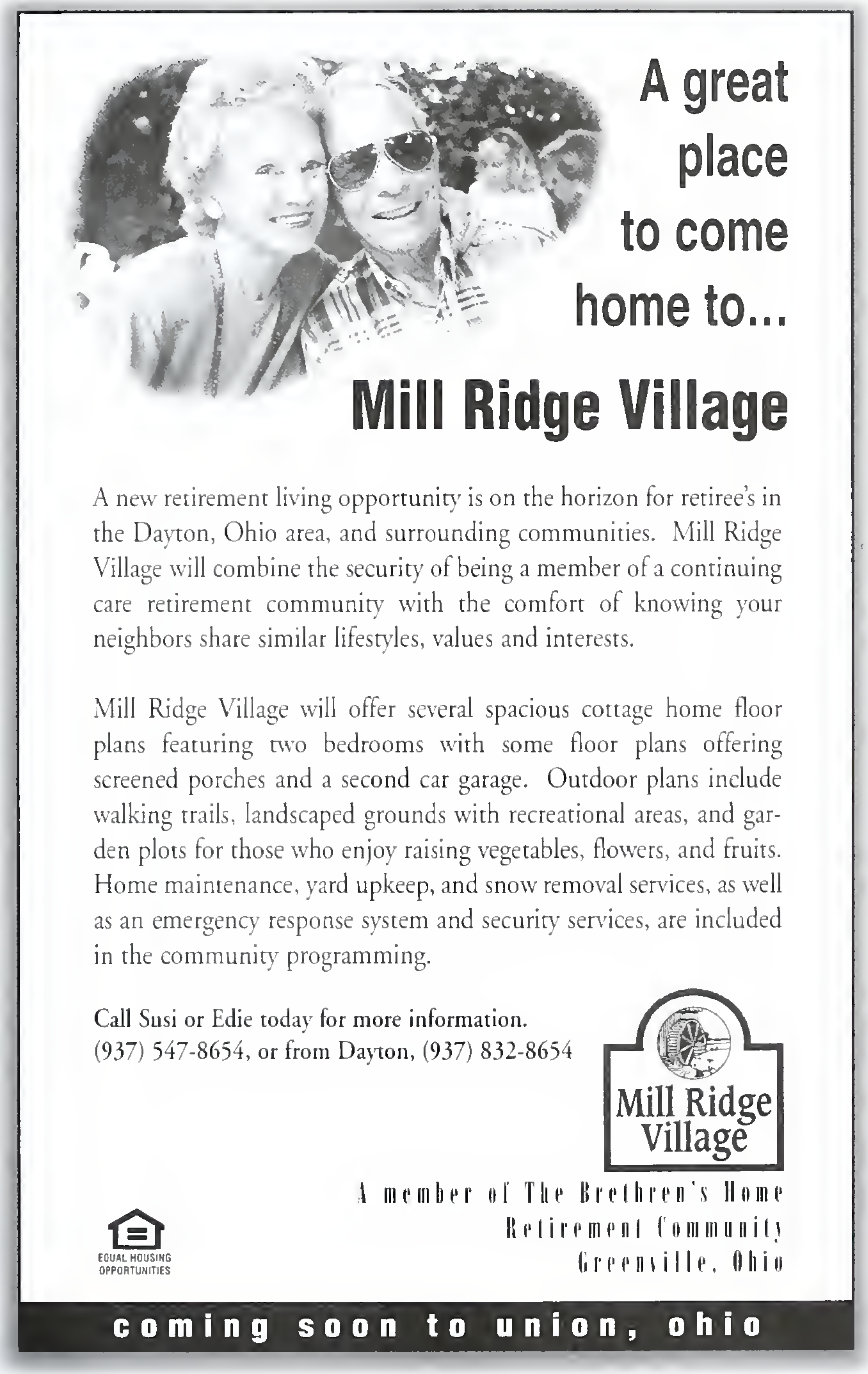
Then something happened. From the most unlikely source came our call. The insurance company covering us for our liability insurance sent some information about managing our risk in terms of children's programming. The company proposed a "two-adult" rule in any church-related children's activity. The very idea of needing to recruit two teachers for every class was horrifying initially, and we imagined that it might be the end of our program, for if we struggled finding one teacher, how would we find two?

This spawned our brainchild, which was to have two-teacher teams, which teach Sunday school on an every-other-month rotation. This limited any one person's level of commitment to one month at a time, which was manageable and increased our children's exposure to adults in their faith community. The concept took off. In the beginning, however, I answered a lot of questions from Brethren Press as I called to order "four teacher's guides and two student packs." Our student pack orders currently outnumber our teacher's guides!

The team teaching has built bridges in our congregation and our children feel valued and blessed by personal relationships with so many in their faith community. With average church attendance of about 100, we currently have 22 church members who teach Sunday school!

Our average of 30 or so children who now attend Sunday school weekly can be heard bounding down our hallways singing the latest song from the Noah Cantata or reciting the books of the Old Testament. We feel blessed indeed!

Debra L. Merrifield
Sunday school superintendent
Glendale (Ariz.) Church of the Brethren



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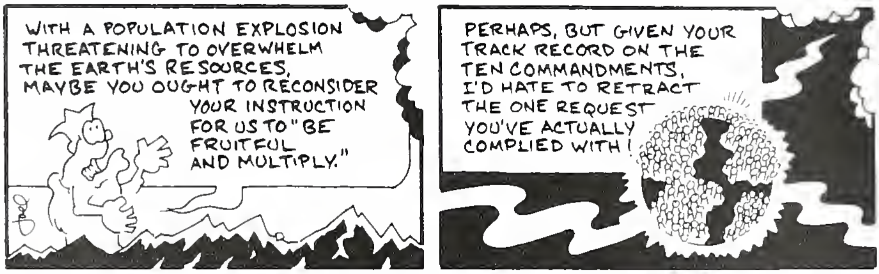
Pontius' Puddle


WITH A POPULATION EXPLOSION THREATENING TO OVERWHELM THE EARTH'S RESOURCES, MAYBE YOU OUGHT TO RECONSIDER YOUR INSTRUCTION FOR US TO "BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY."
PERHAPS, BUT GIVEN YOUR TRACK RECORD ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, I'D HATE TO RETRACT THE ONE REQUEST YOU'VE ACTUALLY COMPLIED WITH!
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Coordinator of Centralized Services. The Association of Brethren Caregivers is looking for a full-time Coordinator of Centralized Services to assist the Executive Director with programming and services to the association and the Fellowship of Brethren Homes, a ministry with Brethren retirement communities. Ideal candidates will demonstrate the following qualifications: working knowledge of the mechanisms and processes which impact services to the aging; experience in retirement community management; understanding of Church of the Brethren heritage; bachelor's degree in a related field; proficiency in interpretation and consensus building; comfort providing leadership in an environment with diverse interests; excellent communication, organization and computer skills. Send letter of application, resume and three references to Steve Mason, Executive Director, ABC, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

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Glendale, AZ 85301	(602) 937-9131
Sunday Service	10:30 AM
Phoenix First Church of the Brethren	
3609 N. 27th Street	
Phoenix, AZ 85016	(602) 955-8537
Sunday Service	10:45 AM
Tucson Church of the Brethren	
2200 North Dodge Boulevard	
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For information contact:
Elsie Holderread at 800-742-5100
or e-mail eholderread_gb@brethren.org
Office of Human Resources
Church of the Brethren General Board

Turning Points

New members

Barren Ridge, Staunton, Va.: Travis Moyers, Melissa Moyers, Billy Duff, Dorcus Duff, Holly Duff, Jenny Duff, Chris Coffman, Jarrod Coffman, Bobbie Packard
Big Creek, Cushing, Okla.: Rosalea Cox
Bush Creek, Monrovia, Md.: Mindee Brashear, Ron Brashear, Becky Burke, Doris Flynn, Joshua Flynn, William Goode, Jacqueline Goode, Britnie Greene, Michelle Hartley, James Lehman, Curtis Keeney, Lisa Keeney, Carol Poole, Jennifer Shea, Nancy Shea, Sandy Shea, Donna Ward
Champaign, Ill.: Robin Trudeau
Elizabethtown, Pa.: Laura Barlet, Adrienne Keesey, Megan Baum, Amanda Bunting, Erin Bunting, Joshua Bunting, Anna Eller, Jessica Hoover, Joseph Bedenbaugh, Joshua Day, Laura Viscome, Miranda Sweigart, Philip Rhodes, Ryan Corso, Shelby White, Jesse Eisenbise, Brian Helm, Jonathan Young, Jennifer Baum, Gregg Epps, Pete Fox, Melissa Musser, Dean and Megan Sweigart, Cindy Tschudy, Heidi and Heather Tschudy, Dorothy White, Jodi Yountz, Joseph and Becky Zaleski, Pat and Terri Dennehy, Gene and Barbara Ellis, Carol Tobias, Scott and Richelle Trayer, Paul and Marie Williams, Paul and Dorothy Worman, Donna Weaver, Mike Mast, Martha and Jere Bunting, Bill and Susan McSherry, Bob and Sylvia Lightner, Louise Pippin, Ryan Baum
Harrisonburg, Va.: Sarah Carothers, Kali Dove, Crystal Lantz, Jeannie Loker, Melissa Martz, Daniel Mason, Chad Rhodes, Kristin Ruscher, Dawn Lokey, Chandra Mitchell, Steve Spart, Rebecca Bowser, Timothy Coffman, Daniel Garst, Janna Morris, John B. Neff, Mary-Jo Ritchie, Caite White-Kohl, Michael and Lori King, Ed and Edie Pritt, Dick and Peg Rainbolt, Karen Moyers, Allen and Kathy Shull, Laura Stemper, Lauren Somers, Elaine Taylor, Ray and Eleanor Flanagan, Jim and Phyllis Pickett
Huntsdale, Carlisle, Pa.: Winnie Beam, Jennifer Wright, Beatrice Miller, Carol Jones, William Jones
Lampeter, Pa.: Charlene Book, April Brackbill, Lindsey Koch, Kelli Rath, Jay Lance, Jared Spence, Jason Spence, Justin Feeney, Adrie Fry, Kelly Hockenbroacht, Jamie Peffley, Nichole Peffley, Benjamin Thomas, David and Carol Work, Matthew and Marie Cooper
Linville Creek, Broadway, Va.: Valerie Fleming, Ron Gentry, Michele and Tim Reger, Janet Smallwood, Tracey Wooddell, Clair and Phyllis Cheuvront, Harold and June Fleming, Cameron Pond
Meyerstown, Pa.: Betty Williard, Ashley Hoover, Sara Hibshman, Chad Shelly, Kevin Foster
Modesto, Calif.: Muriel Alexander, Jim Costello, Patty Geer, Ila Shelor
Monroeville, Pa.: Jennifer Joy Hernley, Meredith Ritchey
New Enterprise, Pa.: John and Annabell Frazier, Cathy Jo Hart, Dennis Brumbaugh, Linda Brumbaugh, Alisha Brumbaugh, Roger and Sherry Wright, Dylan and Britta Snowberger, Bill and Carol Robinson, Sam Spice
Northern Colorado, Windsor, Colo.: Ann and Fred Norton
Peoria, Ill.: Cathy Gilbert, Jonathan Grabb, Lisa Johnston, Wendy Matheny, Jeremiah Smith, Timothy Van Autreve, Austin Giles, Greg Johnston, Justin Matheny, Lindsay Nelson, Joseph Smith
Prince of Peace, Kettering, Ohio: Barbara Marshall, Elizabeth Reiter
Ridgeway Community, Harrisburg, Pa.: Matthew Dotter, Ashley Hanna, Amanda Horoschak, Elizabeth Humphreys, Stephanie Rowe
Stevens Hill Community, Elizabethtown, Pa.: Tim Bryan, Carl and Michelle Davis, Duane Smith, Bill Sturn, Zachary Sturn, Brad Whiteman, Shelley Smith, Cindy Sturn, Dennis and Audean Bryan, Leara Kline, Brooke Robertson, Linda Whiteman
Sugar Creek West, Lima, Ohio: Rhonda Swallow, Delores Vice, Angela Thomas
Woodbury, Pa.: Michelle Whetstone, Michael Whetstone

Wedding Anniversaries

Brill, Betty and Norm, Dayton, Ohio, 55
Fisher, Bryant and Margaret, Monrovia, Md., 50
Fleming, Walter and Betty, Monrovia, Md., 50
Helsel, Walter Jr. and Martha, Lancaster, Pa., 50
Peterman, Kenneth and Louise, Harrisburg, Pa., 50
Robinson, Paul and Mary, Sebring, Fla., 60
Shumaker, Thomas and Alah Mae, Burlington, W. Va., 55

Deaths

Alger, Edna Henry, 71, Front Royal, Va., March 15
Alt, Ottis P., 59, Petersburg, W. Va., April 3
Ballard, Wilbur, 79, Dayton, Ohio, Feb. 11
Barnhouse, Jimmie, 60, Mathias, W. Va., April 8
Beahm, Henry E., 93, Roanoke, Va., April 1
Benson, Talitha C., 82, Staunton, Va., April 2
Biegel, Beverly B., 74, Harrisonburg, Va., March 30
Bloom, Geneva, Elkhart, Ind., May 23
Bollinger, Blance A., 78, New Oxford, Pa., May 7
Bowman, Clarence R., 94, Bridgewater, Va., April 19
Brantner, Eva, 89, Keyser, W. Va., May 21
Brown, Joshua F., 90, Wyndmoor, Pa., May 29
Butzler, Joanne V., 61, Bridgewater, Va., April 15
Carper, Raymond A., 79, Fitzgerald, Ga., March 29
Cave, Bessie L., 86, Luray, Va., March 30
Clark, Mildred, 89, Grottoes, Va., May 12
Cooper, Mary, 93, North Manchester, Ind., Oct. 19
Daniel, Gazel, 81, Cushing, Okla., May 29
Danner, Marianna, Astoria, Ill., Dec. 28
Davis, Oliver J. "Dick", 77, Harrisonburg, Va., March 23
Delawder, William H., 85, Moorefield, W. Va., March 24
Diehl, Russell J., 83, Mount Crawford, Va., April 28
Dove, Dennis Dow, 81, Baker, W. Va., March 17
Dove, William Howard, 89, Fulks Run, Va., March 16
Felton, Elsie Florene, 88, Rowlesburg, W. Va., Dec. 30
Fike, Clarence B., 93, Sebring, Fla., May 28
Ford, Maude E., 95, Oakton, Va., April 29
Fyock, Nellie, 80, Penn Run, Pa., December, 1997
Garber, Willie P., 87, Timberville, Va., May 27
Griffith, Elbert E., 74, Linville, Va., May 15
Grore, Vivian, 77, Elkhart, Ind., Dec. 16
Hearn, Cloyd A., 79, Dover, Pa., June 5
Herbst, Fred H. Sr., 89, York Pa., June 9
Hoffeditz, Beulah V., 94, Bridgewater, Va., March 8
Hoover, Nora E., 85, York, Pa., May 17
Hurst, Wilmer, R., 67, Harrisonburg, Va., May 24
Hylton, Ena J., 90, Roanoke, Va., April 23
Joseph, Pearl E., 71, Front Royal, Va., March 29
Keller, Annie Ruth, 89, Mount Jackson, Va., April 6
Kuykendall, Amelda, 87, Fort Seybert, W. Va., March 30
Laughman, Harold E., New Oxford, Pa., June 6
Laughman, Ruth M., 90, Glen Rock, Pa., June 7
Ledine, Clifford, 86, Dixon, Ill., June 22
Liller, Sarah Elizabeth, 87, Keyser, W. Va., Dec. 15
Ludwick, Georgia M., 97, Keyser, W. Va., Jan. 13
Markey, Harry T., 65, York County, Pa., May 20
Mauck, Cleve Sr., 75, Woodstock, Va., March 27
Moyers, Conley J., 78, Franklin, W. Va., April 18
Moyers, James W., 86, Harrisonburg, Va., June 9
Myers, Berniece Miller, 94, Harrisonburg, Va., March 7
Myers, Lucinda M., 93, East Berlin, Pa., June 1
Ness, Odessa D., 53, York, Pa., April 10
Ours, Mary I., 64, Fisher, W. Va., March 11
Patton, John L. (Larry), 64, Winchester, Va., May 7
Pennybacker, Juanita Swecker, 81, Blue Grass, Va., March 10
Pickett, Nina Sue, Winston-Salem, N. C., 48, March 20
Plaugher, John Paul, 77, Bridgewater, Va., March 16
Pletcher, Sarah, 69, Elkhart, Ind., March 13
Propst, Roberta P., 67, Franklin, W. Va., May 2
Rensberger, Annamae, 60, Pomona, Calif., May 26
Rhodes, Nelson L., 70, Dayton, Va., May 11
Rice, John, 94, Penn Run, Pa., May 10
Robinson, Wilson W., 78, Harrisonburg, Va., June 9
Sandridge, Dennis, 67, Bridgewater, Va., April 2
Secrist, Waldo F., 72, Broadway, Va., April 17
Seveir, Wilbur James, 92, Franklin, W. Va., March 11
Shearer, Clara, New Oxford, Pa., April 30
Shiflett, Elmer Thomas, 96, Charlottesville, Va., May 24
Shull, Ralph H., 84, Harrisonburg, Va., May 14
Simmons, Hattie H., 94, Bridgewater, Va., April 15
Simmons, Lucille Switzer Wise, 92, Staunton, Va., April 1
Simmons, Ervin Richard, 77, Harrisonburg, Va., May 12
Smith, Cecil Hay, 76, Harrisonburg, Va., March 11
Sowles, Maxine, 79, Elkhart, Ind., May 23
Spitzer, Reba Phares, 92, Bridgewater, Va., April 22
Stead, Peggy, 55, Strasburg, Va., March 25
Stine, Gladys I., 94, Dallas Center, Iowa, Feb. 14
Strawderman, Luther Lee, 79, Dorcas, W. Va., April 27
Stroble, Joan S., 63, Harrisonburg, Va., March 30
Taylor, A. Wayne, 80, Petersburg, W. Va., March 26
Thompson, Michael D., 42, Austin, Texas, April 5
Traughber, Earl E., 95, Decatur, Ill., June 18
Trout, Howard L., 81, York, Pa., May 5
Tyler, Elva E., 92, Keyser, W. Va., Jan. 10
Vance, Elsie M., 93, Onego, W. Va., April 16
Via, Lyda, 87, Staunton, Va., June 14
Warner, Alice L., 95, Thurmont, Md., April 22

Pastoral Placements

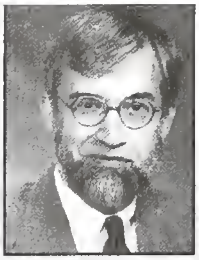
O'Malley, Beth, Columbia United Christian Church, Columbia, Md., April 5

Licensings

Belcher, Marvin, Nov. 22, Bakersfield, Calif.
Clark, Randy, March 14, Wiley Ford, W. Va.
Hullihen, James, Jan. 19, Sugar Run, Mount Union, Pa.
Keeling, J. Matthew, Nov. 22, Bakersfield, Calif.
Russel, Charles, Nov. 22, Community, Mesa, Ariz.
Satvedi, Valentina, Jan. 17, N. County, San Marcos, Calif.
Sexton, Norma, Nov. 22, Bakersfield, Calif.
Snyder, Ernest M., Jan. 17, Tucson, Ariz.
Sparks, George, Nov. 22, Pomona, Calif.
Sparks, Sharon, Nov. 22, Pomona, Calif.
Thomas, Daniel R., Feb. 22, Locust Grove, Johnstown, Pa.

Ordinations

Carter, Jeffrey, May 16, Manassas, Va.
Charlton, Burl, March 14, Tear Coat, Augusta, W. Va.
Combs, Daniel, March 14, Capon Chapel, West Marva
Derr, H. Kevin, May 14, Beech Grove, Hollansburg, Ohio
Lambert, Linda, May 16, Thurmont, Md.
Lehigh, Daniel Grant, April 4, Upper Conewago, East Berlin, Pa.
Nearhoof, Sharon, Feb. 7, Spring Mount, Warriors Mark, Pa.
Snyder, Ernest M., April 19, Tucson, Pacific Southwest
Weatherholt, Otis "Buzz", March 14, Moorefield, West Marva



Editorial

Big tent

With one of the top items of business a revision of the Articles of Incorporation for the Brethren Benefit Trust, some may get the impression that this year's Annual Conference was a yawner. One observer commented that there was "an almost perplexing level of agreement" on business items by the delegate body in Orlando. The good professor William Willimon said he'd seen our agenda and noticed, "A lot of that business is yesterday's business." Former moderator Chuck Boyer, the ever-truthful pastor of La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, said what others were thinking when he told a luncheon crowd, "This conference has bored the Dickens out of me."

Even so, worship was wonderful, friends were plentiful, and the gathering of Brethren Volunteer Service workers from around the globe was inspirational. Besides, the Spirit is moving behind the scenes. Forces are gathering, relationships are forming, treasuries are growing, new leaders are emerging. This is a time for regrouping; perhaps it is the calm before a holy storm.

Collaboration is beginning. This year Annual Conference officially recognized the Association of Brethren Caregivers and On Earth Peace Assembly as agencies "fully reportable and accountable" to Annual Conference, joining the General Board, Bethany Seminary, and Brethren Benefit Trust. These agencies have always been closely related to the official church, so the significance is not so much to change present reality as it is to begin a new "model" for the church's future organization. Rather than the General Board and its staff being seen as the church, the new picture has the Annual Conference and its Standing Committee as the central body, with other agencies "reporting" to Annual Conference. This offers the possibility that Annual Conference could in the future bring other groups into its big tent, allowing these groups to retain their autonomy while still being firmly entrenched as part of the Church of the Brethren. Though there are no plans now for adding more groups, collaboration offers possibilities for expanding ministry, for offering multiple giving options to donors, and for keeping us together in times of disagreement.

Making collaboration work takes work. One difficult issue is how congregations should allocate their giving. There was some concern that congregations might start dividing their denominational giving into thirds, sending equal amounts to the General Board, ABC, and OEPA. That could spell trouble for the General Board and its $5 million budget, or a windfall for ABC and OEPA, which each spent well under $500,000 last year. The immediate goal for the newly recognized organizations was not to gain equal funding with the General Board, but to ask congregations to "replace" the funding they formerly received through the General Board. Last year ABC received $111,500 through the General Board ($60,000 a year continues, from the Behold campaign, through 2000) and OEPA received $35,000 through the General Board, of which $25,000 continues, from the Behold campaign, in 1998 and 1999.

My hunch is that congregations will recognize the relative size of the church's organizations and their program responsibilities, then fund them accordingly. Ideally, congregations won't slice the pie thinner but rather bake a bigger pie. The General Board doesn't need less funding, but the church's new agencies need more. ABC and OEPA represent new opportunities for congregations to participate in wider denominational ministries.

Giving remains solid. As of May 31, congregational support of the General Ministries Fund was essentially identical to last year, not decreased as expected. Giving to the Emergency Disaster Fund was up substantially, Global Food Crisis Fund giving was up, and special gifts from congregations were nearly double those of this time last year. "Overall, the income situation for the most par is better than many expected," said Ken Neher, funding office director, "and there is room now, though the year is far from over, for guarded optimism." Add this to the $315,000 operating surplus that treasurer Judy Keyser reported the church experienced at year-end 1997, and there is still more room for optimism.

Brethren Benefit Trust is strong. Boring or not, this year's Annual Conference approval of expanded services from BBT is a reminder that this church partner is healthy, growing, and ambitious. The successful completion of BBT's relocation loan to Bethany Seminary bring to mind that BBT could be helpful with future building and property issues facing the church. As an expanded Site Committee explores options to consolidate the church's national offices in a "denominational center," BBT's financial strength may prove useful.

The General Board staff has a new executive director. Annual Conference marked the beginning of Judy Mills Reimer's service as head of the General Board staf With her business background and church experience, Reimer brings excellent credentials for leading the church's business. From her energy and savvy, we can expect much.

William Willimon called on the Church of the Brethren t become "a people with faithful imagination." It's coming. We are getting ready for things hoped for, things unseen.

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Let Our Joys Be Known
A Brethren Heritage Curriculum for Youth
Frank Ramirez
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Alice Gelman

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Messenger

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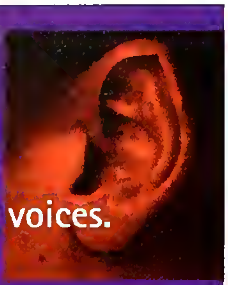

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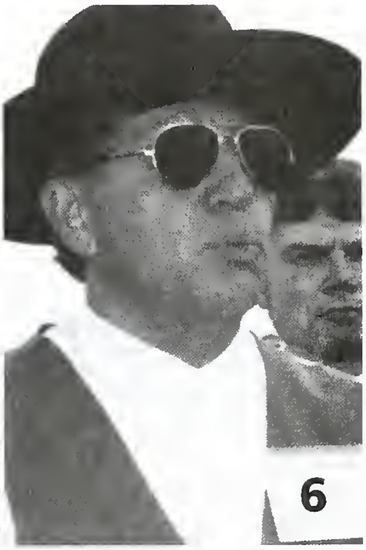
Messenger

Vol. 147, No. 8 September 1998 www.brethren.org

Editor: Fletcher Farrar
News: Nevin Dulabaum
Subscriptions: Vicki Roche
Publisher: Wendy McFadden
Designer: Marianne Sackett

On the cover: Gloves distributed to NYCers at the closing worship service symbolize the courage to live "with eyes of faith," and the unique memories they will take home.



Frank Ramierez

Jeff Leard

Features

6 **A Brethren family reunion**
At the second Brethren World Assembly, the denominations that trace their history from the courageous 1708 baptism in Schwarzenau studied their common heritage and explored the theme "Faith and Family—Challenges and Commitments." Frank Ramirez was there to chronicle the education and the fellowship.

8 **Beyond right and wrong**
The July MESSENGER stirred the thinking of Bethany professor Murray Wagner, who wrote this thoughtful essay with fatherly advice on how to live life when it's not always to know what's right.

9 **Special section: National Youth Conference**
If you're looking for signs of hope in the Church of the Brethren, check out this gathering of more than 4,500 youth and advisors. Randy Miller covers the highlights, finds out what the youth thought, and leaves you feeling optimistic about the direction of the church.

25 **Letters, letters, letters**
The letters to the editor section is especially full of vim and vinegar this month, with Brethren adding their perspectives on pluralism, the military and patriotism, Bethany seminary, Annual Conference, and the Holy Spirit. What do you think?

Departments

2 From the Publisher
3 In Touch
25 Letters
31 Turning Points
32 Editorial

From the Publisher

The last time I went to National Youth Conference was 12 years ago, back in the old days when it was small enough to be housed at Estes Park. Now it's 50 percent bigger—a real sign of hope in a denomination that worries about diminishing numbers.

Just as the attendance was bigger, so was the coverage. In the old days, NYC was covered by one or two people carrying notepads and cameras. This year's conference was covered by a team of people operating out of a press room linked to the Internet.

Through a partnership between the Brethren Press communication team and the NYC staff, the 1998 conference was thoroughly covered onsite by a daily newssheet, a four-page printed wrap-up, and a Web site that was updated several times a day (and can still be accessed at www.brethren.org)—all orchestrated by General Board staff member Nevin Dulabaum.

Our post-NYC coverage is right here. This special section is something of a departure for MESSENGER. It's a 16-page, full-color mini-magazine. Written in a breezy, slightly irreverent style, it's aimed a little more at the youth than at the regular readership of MESSENGER. But don't be fooled. Despite the light touch, the articles make clear that there was plenty of spiritual depth to NYC.

The cluster was made possible through the volunteer efforts of Randy Miller, who wrote the articles and supervised the team of photographers—which included Jeff Leard, Jim Tomlonson, and Frank Klein—that documented the event for both MESSENGER and the NYC archives.

A photojournalist by background, Randy is managing editor of World Vision International's journal *Together*. He is a member of La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren and a part-time faculty member at the University of La Verne. Years ago he served MESSENGER as its first editorial assistant, volunteering through BVS. Prior to that he was associate coordinator of the 1974 National Youth Conference.

To help youth remember their experiences in Colorado, the NYC office is sending this issue of MESSENGER to every conference participant. Extra copies are available by sending $2 per copy to MESSENGER, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. (Brethren Press also has a limited number of copies of the NYC theme song cassette, which can be ordered by calling customer service at 800-441-3712. And NYC wrap-up videos are available from the NYC office at 800-323-8039.)

By the way: Randy did an informal survey of youth at NYC and found that one-third to one-half didn't recognize MESSENGER as their denominational magazine. We hope this issue gets them hooked. After all, MESSENGER is one of the best ways to keep them connected to the wider church.

Keeping them connected will help them build on their life-changing experience this summer. But maybe more important, it will also allow their enthusiasm to infect us all.

Wendy McFadden

How to reach us

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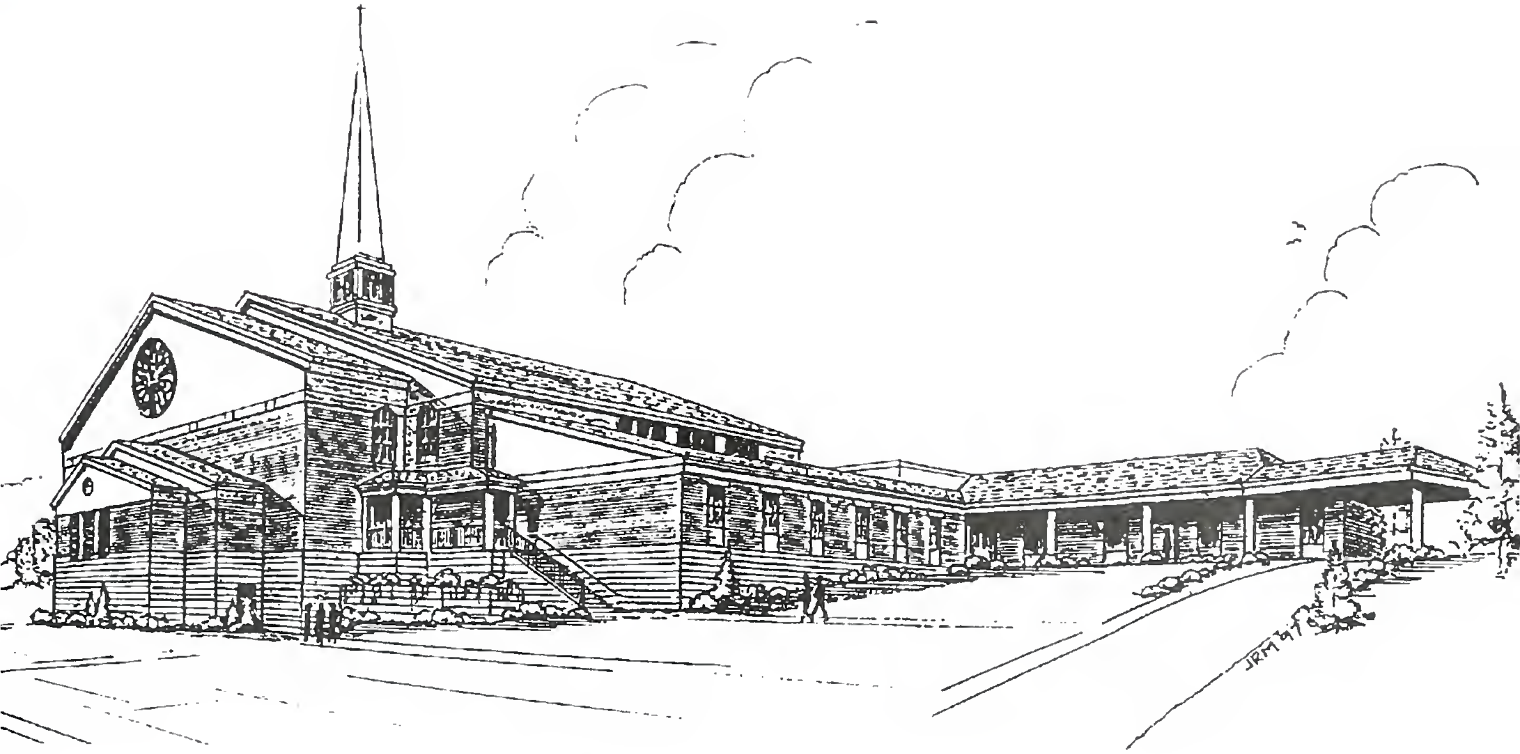


Built on spacious grounds *on a hill next to Bridgewater College, the church looks out over the town of Bridgewater, with views of the Allegheny and Blue Ridge mountains.*

Bridgewater church to be dedicated Nov. 1

The $5 million new building for the Bridgewater (Va.) Church of the Brethren will be dedicated in special worship services Nov. 1. A new pipe organ, scheduled to arrive in mid-September, may be installed in time for the dedication. The congregation moved into the new facility in June. The sanctuary has seats for 550, plus a 50-seat choir section. The building includes a library and three education wings as well as rooms for the food pantry and community pre-school housed in the church, according to Wendell Eller, associate pastor for visitation. A dual-purpose room doubles as a basketball court and a fellowship hall that will seat 400. The church is built on one level for complete accessibility. The state-of-the-art sound system also has special provisions for the hearing impaired. The congregation's former building was purchased by Bridgewater College for use as a chapel.

Remembered

Hazel N. Kennedy, 89, died July 14 at her home in La Verne, Calif. She was a curriculum editor for children and educational planner for the General Board in Elgin, Ill., for 25 years, retiring in 1974. Upon her retirement a MESSENGER editorial spoke of her quiet wisdom: "Wherever she goes, Hazel Kennedy probably won't be shouting to make herself heard. But out of a rich life she has much to share. People who know her will listen."

•Morley J. Mays, president of Elizabethtown College from 1966 to 1977, died July 5 in Lancaster, Pa. He was 86. Prior to being president he was first vice president for academic affairs at Juniata College. He was a founder and chairman of the administrative committee for Brethren Colleges Abroad. He was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Lancaster.

•Teresa Crawford Lowe of Hanover, Pa., died June 29 at the age of 108. She was a resident of The Brethren Home Community at New Oxford, Pa. Raised in the Church of the Brethren, she came from a Pennsylvania Dutch background. She was known for her sense of humor. Interviewed by a local newspaper on her birthday this year, she said her family moved around a lot while she was growing up. "I once asked my father if the sheriff was after me because we moved so much," she said.

Remarkable marriages

Congratulations to Glen and Mabel Moyer, who celebrated 77 years of marriage June 20. They live at The Brethren's Home, Greenville, Ohio.

Wilbur and Florence Lauver, of Ottawa, Kan., marked 70 years of marriage July 18.

Norman and Beryl Patrick, of Hershey, Pa., observe their 70th anniversary Sept. 22.

Groups collaborate to control health costs

Gary N. Clouser, president of Brethren Village in Lancaster, Pa., was named to the board of directors of Kairos Health Systems, Inc., Mechanicsburg, Pa. Kairos is an innovative effort at collaboration among 14 groups that provide services to seniors in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware. It negotiates contracts with health maintenance organizations and serves as administrator for its members' managed care patients. Clouser, who was elected board vice chairman of Kairos, has been president of Brethren Village since 1983.

Gary N. Clouser

Children's Daily News reports from Orlando

Children's activities at Annual Conference in Orlando included publishing a daily newspaper. The children's center planning committee was made up of Mary Boyd, of Venice, Fla., Arlene Ritenour, of Bradenton, Fla., and Jean Lersch, of St. Petersburg, Fla. Jean Lersch provided these excerpts from the children's work.

By Jonathan: Today all of the children activity kids went to the Orlando science museum and we had fun. First, we got to go where ever we wanted. Then, we saw a play called mysteriest mosquitos and it was funny.

Aaron's lead story was headlined, "No air conditioning": Today in the children's center the air conditioning wasn't work-

Modesto's senior committee, *which plans monthly programs, includes, from left in back, Phyllis Harvey, Neva Forney, Roy Owen, and Lois Northrup. In front are Bob Coulson and Max Bashor.*

Seniors "celebrate life" at Modesto

Seniors at the Modesto (Calif.) Church of the Brethren have an active program of monthly meetings with lunch and fellowship. One month's program, called "Celebrate Life," honored those 80 and older. Other programs have been an update on Nigerian missions, a high school choir performance, tours of local industries, and a trip to Calaveras Big Tree State Park. Seventeen seniors from the Modesto congregation were planning to attend the National Older Adult Conference Aug. 31-Sept. 4.

—PHYLLIS HARVEY, *coordinator of senior ministries* ing. Everybody was exausted because it was soooooo HOT! Janitors were on the sene trying to fix it but they couldn't. Hopefully they will have fixed it by tomorrow.

Stephen highlighted an important part of Conference in his article, "My too best friends": I have a friend named Andrew. He is so cool. He has a play station and a Netendo 64! I met a kid named Ryan. He's cool to. He lives in Dayton, Ohio. He has a dog and a rabbit.

Johnathon, Evan, Mike, and Tyler were sportswriters: The chicago Bulls have won there 6th chamionship. It wuld be better if it was in a row. GO Bulls!

Another sports report: Cow ripkin made 3 homeruns in one game on July 3, 1998, in Orlando.

In a column headlined "Kid Talk" was this comment: Lunch was not such a success. The cheese sandwiches could have had ham and other food could have been more junky.

Sarah was positive in her report: We played. I was a helper and I have fun! We did faces. It was fun! We had sand art. It was fun! I loved it. I did Spanish. It was so fun!

Coming home to Long Green Valley

Homecoming is Oct. 11 for the Long Green Valley congregation in Glen Arm, Md. The church built its first meetinghouse 90 years ago. "All are invited to join in rejoicing with us over how God has been meeting with us in this house and the facility that succeeded it," said Peter Haynes, pastor.

—Janet Bowman

Renovation to make church accessible

Topeco Church of the Brethren near Floyd, Va., is undergoing a $300,000 renovation, which includes a new front entrance,an elevator and accessible restrooms, an expanded narthex, and an expanded kitchen and fellowship hall. Topeco is the "mother church" of Floyd County, which at one time was the only county in the US where Brethren were the predominant Christian denomination.

David Radcliff

1998 Youth Peace Travel Team members *are Linetta Alley, of Bridgewater, Va.; Rachel Carroll, of Osceola, Ind.; Lori Van Order, of York, Pa.; and Liz Geisewite, of Logantown, Pa. The team traveled to camps and congregations in the western US, with a stop at National Youth Conference. Jointly sponsored by the General Board's Youth and Young Adult Ministries office and Brethren Witness office, along with On Earth Peace Assembly and the Outdoor Ministries Association, this year's team was the eighth straight to make a summer of sharing the Brethren peace message with their peers.*

Honored in Harrisburg, *from left, Gerald Rhoades, Allen Hansell, Irvin Heishman, and Nancy Heishman.*

A pastor and admirers: *Larry Glick, Joseph Wayne Pence, Dennis Brown, and Doug Phillips.*

Anniversaries worthy of celebration

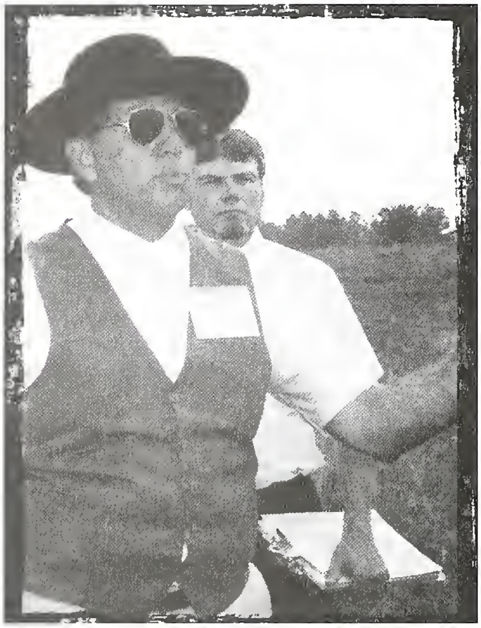
Surpise! The Lebanon Church of the Brethren, Mt. Sidney, Va., surprised their pastor, Joseph Wayne Pence, with a special service in honor of his 10 years of service to the congregation. The service included a sermon by Larry Glick, a presentation on the history of Wayne's life, and a video prepared especially for the occasion.

On June 1 First Church of the Brethren, Harrisburg, Pa., celebrated the 25th anniversary of the ordination of its community minister, Gerald W. Rhoades, as well as his 15 years of service to First Church. Also, co-pastors Irvin and Nancy Heishman were recognized for their 10 years of service to the congregation. Guest speaker for the morning worship was Allen Hansell, director of ministry on the General Board staff.

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," Messenger, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, Il 60120.

BRETHREN FAMILY REUNION

Six denominations gather at second World Assembly



Linville Creek's *Paul Roth led tours of John Kline historical sites.*

Family life *was the focus of the papers presented at Bridgewater College.*

PHOTOS AND STORY BY FRANK RAMIREZ

Speaking to the theme of the second Brethren World Assembly, "Faith and Family — Challenges and Commitments," keynote speaker Carl Bowman compared the difficult life Brethren faced in the 1890s, with Brethren life in the 1930s and 1990s.

Brethren men and women worked in partnership in their own realms on the farm, according to Bowman, who is chair of the sociology department at Bridgewater College. Each was essential, and strong-armed men and women, along with the children and extended family, worked hard for the success of the enterprise. On many occasions one would enter the realm of the other to get the work done.

The family consisted of the household, with aunts and uncles and grandparents, and in a larger sense, the entire church. By contrast, life had changed enough by the 1930s that the so-called "modern" family came into being. Father left home to work, and mother, now considered frail, stayed at home at "women's work." People came to think of the family as consisting of only husband, wife, and children.

Bowman insists that period, extending through the 1940s and '50s into the '60s, was an anomaly, and that we're better off comparing our lives with the 1890s if we look to the past for solutions to family problems.

Now the family is stretched in many different directions, Bowman claimed. There are more single households, consisting of the widowed and widowers, young people delaying marriage, and single parents raising children.

"What does this have to do with Brethren families?" Bowman asked. "Young Brethren differ little from their religious peers. Although there is some indication they had experienced fewer broken homes, they looked like other people. Their attitude towards violence, the death penalty, and Christian patriotism are the only differences."

Bowman said, "Family challenges spring from the very challenges of life at the end of the 20th century. Even though some of us are not of the world, we're still in it. . . . It's popular to say the family is in crisis, but that suggests something that might be solved. This is wishful thinking. The crisis is chronic, so this is not a crisis but a new reality. Family is a work we need to engage in as we turn to our faith for answers."

It was all part of the second Brethren World Assembly, held July 15-18 at Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, Va.

Twenty-five years ago M.R. Zigler gathered together representatives of the five major Brethren groups in America for what he called a handshake at the nearby Tunker Meeting House. For nearly a century before that the groups that traced their roots back to the 1708 baptism in Schwarzenau had studiously avoided each other. In a way it was no different than members of the same family who are too proud to admit they'd really like to get together. Over the years the issues that had divided some of the groups had lessened in importance.

The representatives so enjoyed getting together that the practice of gathering face to face continued. Rather than trying to settle differences or seek formal unification, the meetings focused on joint projects that all could support, especially the Brethren Encyclopedia. In 1992 the first Brethren World Assembly came together in Pennsylvania on the campus of Elizabethtown College. And at this second assembly, some 130 Brethren came together for worship, fellowship, sightseeing, and a number of papers on the conference's theme.

In addition to the American Brethren, José Rivero, the national supervisor of the Brethren Church in Argentina, and Dan Kim, former Church of the Brethren missionary to South Korea, were in attendance.

Throughout the conference, other speakers examined the theme of the family. Though the speakers often had different approaches, a common thread ran through many of the papers read. Brethren need to reclaim their traditional understanding of the extended family, the relationship of the family to the larger family known as the church, and rediscover home devotions. Brethren obviously did not agree on biblical language regarding a hierarchical structure in the basic family, but all agreed that Christian love and discipleship had to undergird the family structure.

Different Brethren groups hold different views on the place of women in the ministry. Some confined women to subordinate roles in the church, with the greatest expression of God's gift to be found in the mission fields. The groups hold different views on the authority of the church, running the gamut from those who embrace an entirely congregational structure, to those who recognize Annual Meeting's rulings on the Scriptures to be authoritative.

For all Brethren, the Bible is key. All the groups would argue in the same fashion. Plunk down the Bible and say, "Show it to me in the Word of God." There are differences of interpretation, but the centrality of God's word was a common thread in all the presentations.

Brenda Colijn of the Brethren Church, for instance, spoke about the biblical understanding of the family as a household, and emphasized that in the New Testament that definition was broadened to include a wider range of people. "This is a significant development," she noted. "In the Old Testament, God has a house but no household." In the New Testament, she said, the house of God is a spiritual building, which includes God's people. She added that one of Alexander Mack's favorite images for the church was that of the household.

The centrality of God's word was a common thread through all the Brethren groups.

Nancy Faus, retired professor from Bethany Theological Seminary, recounted the history of family spirituality and devotions among the Brethren, and prescribed several remedies for the difficulties faced by the modern family, including the suggestions that family devotions, scripture reading, and singing be restored.

"Don't worry or feel guilty if daily worship is not always possible. Once or twice a week is more often than what many families are doing. Find a regular time, make it intentional, and put it on your calendar in ink, so it is as important as everything else you're doing that week. So often we say that family time will come when we have finished other things. It never will."

But as informative as these papers were (and they will eventually be published by the Brethren Encyclopedia), it was obvious that most of those in attendance simply enjoyed meeting old friends and making new ones across denominational boundaries. Brethren ate and talked together, two things that all the groups are good at, regardless of their denominational addresses.

At the last Brethren World Assembly there were five denominations that came together. This time there were six. In addition to the Church of the Brethren, the Brethren Church, the Dunkard Brethren, and the Old German Baptist Brethren, the Grace Brethren had split in the interim, and given birth to the Conservative Grace Brethren Churches International. The church's name is derived from the fact that there are nearly as many congregations overseas as in the United States.

From 1708 to 1881 there are 173 years of shared history for all Brethren. Elder John Kline, martyred during the Civil War, was part of that shared history. Paul Roth, pastor of the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren, Broadway, Va., led assembly participants in tours of sites associated with the life of Kline.

Virginian John Kline (1797 - 1864) served as moderator of the denomination during the Civil War and over the course of his long ministry traveled over 100,000 miles, visiting Brethren all across the country. He was eventually murdered by Confederate guerrillas.

There is a stone marker on the spot where Kline was murdered. Some of the Brethren made the arduous walk to that site, now an open field. The solemnity and quiet there was finally broken when Brethren visitors began to sing, "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." The unity of Brethren, present, past, and future, seemed solidly symbolized by that sacred stanza.

Frank Ramirez is pastor of Elkhart Valley Church of the Brethren, Elkhart, Ind., and a frequent contributor to MESSENGER.

Reply

Living beyond right and wrong

BY MURRAY L. WAGNER

One of the nation's favorite writers, Calvin Trillin, recently published a moving memoir, *Messages from My Father* (1996). Trillin's tribute to his father, a Kansas City grocer whose family immigrated from eastern Europe, recounted his vexations over what it means to be Jewish. What's orthodox and what's not? Lists of prescriptions and propositions and postulates, with collections of admonitions and prohibitions and bills of particulars on what's kosher and what's not (not unlike Dale Aukerman's list on what's Christian and what's not in the July MESSENGER). All the do's and don'ts drove old Abe Trillin nuts! Finally, he asked, "Why not just be a *mench*?" And that's the question I'd like to put.

Mench in Yiddish means much more than the German *Mensch*: "person." In Yiddish it means "upright, honorable, decent." Parents tell their children, "Act like a *mench;* be a *mench*!" To say that someone is a *mench* is the finest thing you can say about anybody. It's a person of character, rectitude, and dignity. Time and again I've heard it as a Yiddish understanding of the biblical imperative, "be a *mench*!"

But I don't think that's the way Aukerman reads the Bible. He says, "the biblical writers saw in the human story the continuous struggle between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood." And I would guess, to spin out the bipolar differences a little further, it would be between the elect and the reprobate, the saved and the lost, and who deserves to win the annual Brethren Peacemakers trophy and who doesn't.

No, I think not. I think the biblical story tells of the "Hound of Heaven" in hot pursuit with the question, "Why not be a mench?"

Besides the Aukerman piece in the July MESSENGER, several other articles and letters in the same issue have inspired my reflections on the meaning of mench.

Thirty-eight years ago I entered Brethren Volunteer Service to do alternative service as a conscientious objector. They sent me to Poland to teach English to agricultural students. It was quite a menschlish thing to do, we all thought, so, as the July MESSENGER reports, we are celebrating 50 years of it this year.

But think back and imagine this. I was in Poland during the grimmest days of the Cold War in the very year the Berlin wall went up. Every day Soviet troop trains were heading west toward Berlin. The Polish army was on full alert. And I, a BVSer from southern Ohio, was collecting quite a nice stipend from a communist government. Relatively speaking, it was the best money I've made teaching anytime since! Meanwhile, drawing infantry pay as an American army conscript, one of my high school classmates was heading east toward Berlin. Quick, will someone who knows the truth tell me the difference between right and wrong?

Thanks to the efficiency of the German military machine, Poland's nearly three million Jews had been annihilated. The cradle of European Jewry was Judenrein by the time I got to Poland. So I never met a Jew in Poland, nor had I ever met one in any of the communities where I grew up, not even at Manchester College.

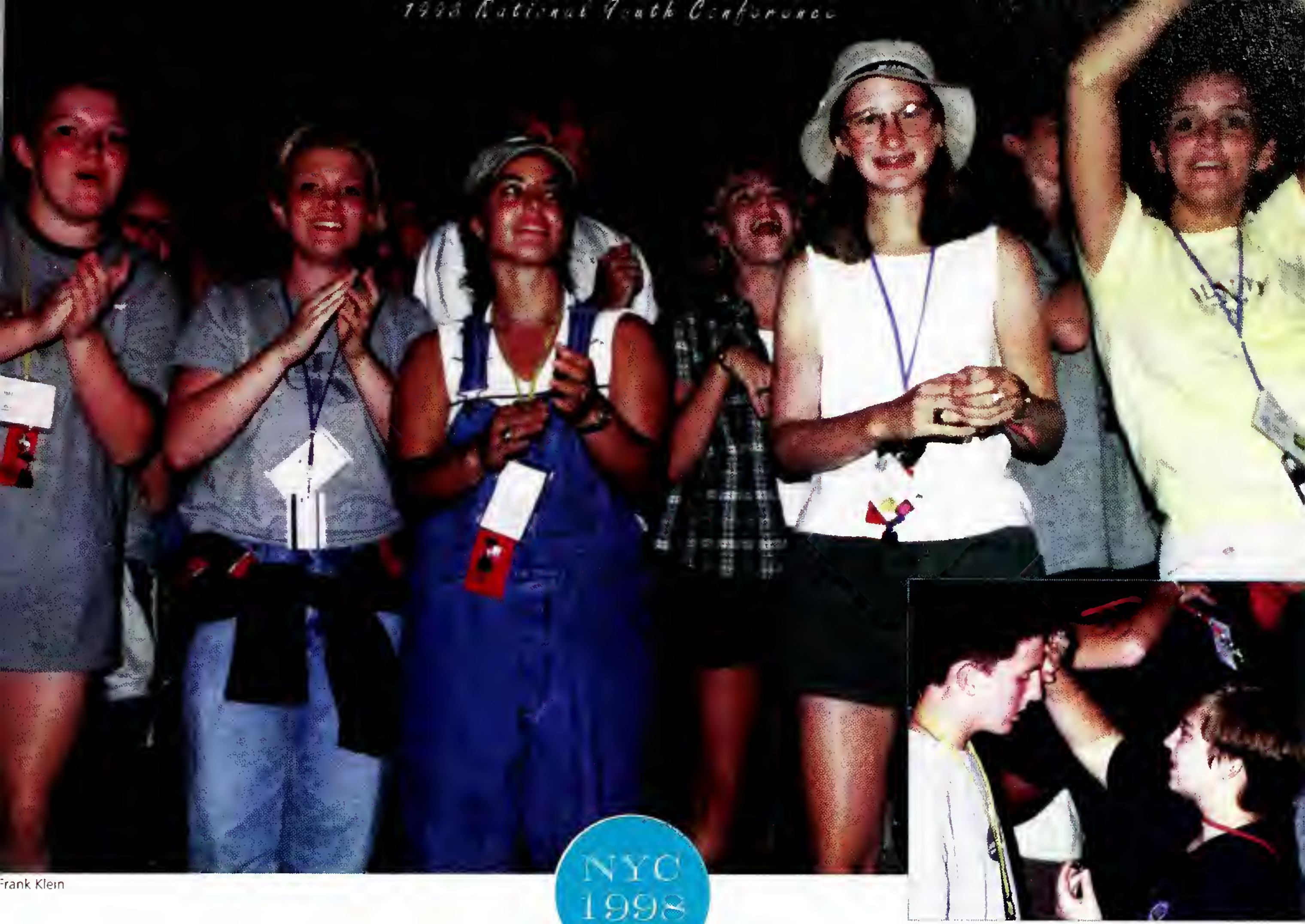
Little could I know that one day I would be back in eastern Poland trying in vain to uncover traces of my wife's lost ancestors. I knew next to nothing about the Shoah until I stared into the Polish genocidal pit of unmenschlichkeit. My denomination slept through the Holocaust like Rip Van Winkel slept through the revolution, uttering not a mumbling word of protest. What then does someone with the name Wagner (the conscientious objector) have to say either to Polish friends who survived, or to Jewish in-laws whose relatives did not? Will someone quick tell me how to hold to the truth and to reject what is false?

I really don't trust either ideologues from the left spouting party lines or theologues from the right thumping holy writ. Wherever they line up on the political spectrum, they all seem to lay positive claim to the knowledge of good and evil. But what they know about the difference between right and wrong is mostly presumption. That's what I think anyway. And I also have concluded after nearly 30 years of teaching Christian history and religious studies in college and seminary classrooms that religion can make good people better, but it can also make bad people worse.

What does it take to be a better person? I think I got the same message from my father as Trillin got from his. My dad got some appreciative recognition from Arlene Bucher in a letter also appearing in the July MESSENGER. Years ago when I called him, a Brethren pastor for 40 years, and my stepmother, Martha Bucher, to tell them I was about to marry a Jew, the pause was short. Then came the message, "If you love her, we love her." And did they ever.

The tribe expanded from Lancaster County to include the New Jersey in-laws. They didn't ask what's right, what's wrong; what's true, what's false; who's in and who's out. "Why not be like a mench?" they asked (the word in Pennsylvania Dutch is the same as in Yiddish), and they answered in lives lived. I can do no better than to keep the question alive for my children and for my grandchildren. M.

Murray L. Wagner, of Richmond, Ind., is professor of historical studies at Bethany Theological Seminary.



Frank Klein

Jeff Leard

NYC 1998

Stories by Randy Miller

What's wrong with these kids?

Moshing, body surfing... whatever the proper term is for hoisting teenagers overhead and passing them around during a rock concert, could not be resisted even by a crowd of Brethren youth who, less than 20 minutes before, were anointing each other's foreheads with oil and dabbing their eyes with handkerchiefs, when the Top-40 band Jars of Clay kicked off their show in Moby Arena Saturday night.

Bodies ride high in what appears to be some kind of massive "trust your neighbor" exercise. Maybe they're just practicing what they heard Friday morning, when youth speaker Cindy Laprade told of her experience in a workshop in which she had to take a crash course in trust by falling backwards from a five-foot platform into the arms of her friends. They didn't drop her, nor are these Brethren dropping any of their newfound brothers and sisters. If you're going to body surf at a rock concert, what better place than over the heads of 4,500 youth who've spent the week bonding and hugging and generally learning to care about each other?

No one got dropped. No limbs were broken. One kid stubbed his toe. Several lost their pillows—at least temporarily—many of which had been carefully crafted by women's sewing circles back home, and were last seen flying through the air over the arena floor. Some lost their voices (including dean Steve Van Houten).

But, overall, it was a relatively safe place to spend the evening. Certainly safer than the anointing service that preceded it. According to NYC counselor John Wenger, there were more medical-related problems arising from the anointing service than there were from the Jars concert.

Frankly, it was a relief to see at least some form of misbehaving going on—albeit rather minor. I was beginning to worry. These kids were being far too nice. Everyone was on his or her best behavior. How would they ever fare in the world beyond

Randy Miller

Jeff Leard

the bounds of NYC? Being around them was like listening to banjo music all the time—no one can listen to banjo music and be anything but chipper and perky.

Evidence of this creeping niceness was apparent from the moment they arrived on Tuesday. Granted, the NYC staff had done a bang-up job of streamlining the registration process. But even when several buses disgorged their weary travelers and sent them, parade-like, to the registration tables, there was no shoving, no bickering, no snide remarks.

Colorado State University police officer Frazier M. Damon, assigned to keep an eye on things during registration, said our NYCers were among the most well-behaved kids he's ever dealt with. The smaller groups are generally easier to handle, he said. But NYC was one of the two largest he's been responsible for this summer. Even with that, he said it was one of the easiest he's experienced. "I'd take these kids any day, versus the opening day of school here."

Standing in the middle of all 4,500 of them the next morning, after they'd just spent 45 minutes in blistering heat waiting for their picture to be taken, the strangeness was unnerving. No one swore, smoked, drank, uttered a discouraging word, or littered. Some were even picking up bits of trash. They all remembered their manners as they wove their way toward their small group locations at various spots around campus.

Halfway to his small group site, Dylan Fanning, 15, of the Glendale (Ariz.) Church of the Brethren, realized he'd left his pillow on the grass in the middle of the picture site. Certain it would be gone by the time he returned, he nevertheless felt compelled to check it out. His pillow was right where he had left it.

Later, three girls witnessed a fellow NYCer shoplift three $7 necklaces from a jeweler in the Lory Student Center. At last, you may think—someone behaving like the teenagers we are accustomed to hearing about on the news. Before you get your hopes up, the next morning the three girls returned to the jeweler with $21 of their own NYC spending money to cover the amount he'd lost at the hands of their fellow conferee.

"I don't know what you're teaching those kids," the jeweler told Steve Van Houten, "but keep it up."

NYCers are so well behaved that, according to one world-weary youth I spoke with after the Jars of Clay concert, they don't even know how to mosh properly. "They don't go to enough concerts," he lamented. "They aren't doing it right. They're going to hurt somebody." They didn't. But being seen in the presence of so many embarrassingly inexperienced moshers and body surfers had clearly put a crimp in his evening.

What's with these kids who can't even misbehave properly? Can being exposed to non-stop kindness for five days have long-term effects? It appears so. How could this happen? Who have they been listening to? What have they been reading?

Their counselors. Their peers. The Bible. And maybe a little Jars of Clay.

Randy Miller

Build your relationship with God

You could hear it in her voice, in the cadence and rhythm with which she delivered her message. You could see him in her face, and in the way she moved. That she was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s daughter was unmistakable. Yet, as her words unfolded before the crowd assembled in Moby Arena Friday night, it was clear that the Rev. Bernice King was more than just the daughter of a legendary figure. Here was a woman who had been through struggles of her own, and learned valuable lessons about survival, and about the importance of building a relationship with God.

She did not begin by speaking, however. She began with a song.

"Anybody here play the piano?" she asked. NYC pianist Shawn Kirchner leapt onto the stage and took a seat at the Steinway. King began to sing, "The Jesus in me loves the Jesus in you. You're easy, so easy, you're easy to love." In moments, the entire arena was rocking to the gentle gospel beat. Then she began to speak.

"I was five when my father was assassinated," she said. She related the struggles of growing up without a father. She also described the pressure she felt in being the daughter of a larger-than-life figure. How could she ever live up to that? What if she failed? She got so low that at one time she considered ending her life.

Jeff Leard

"It was as if nobody could reach me," she said. "In a sense, I had lost all hope. But as soon as I picked up that knife, the voice of God spoke. It said, 'Put that knife down, because you do have a future, and you do have a destiny.'

"I don't know what you've had to deal with," she told the spellbound youth, "but I came here to tell you that God says, 'Your destiny is greatness.' Not material greatness, but spiritual greatness."

The key to achieving that greatness, she said, lies in forming a strong relationship with God.

"No matter what is going on in your life, always hold onto God. Always stay connected to God. And when you do that, it doesn't matter how bad it gets. He'll take you over, under, around or through. He is faithful."

NYCers young and old were gripped by Bernice King's message:

Randy Miller

Greg Brown, 15, Lebanon Church of the Brethren, Mount Sidney, Va.: "She was one of the people who got through. Sometimes it's hard to get through to teens."

Jim Tomlonson

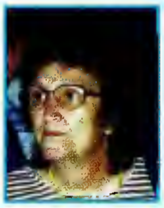
Valerie Messenger, Nokesville (Va.) Church of the Brethren: "I remember when her father was shot. I was in Los Angeles. I felt so sad that one of those who was for us was no longer there. Bernice's testimony of hope for kids is so great. When things get tough, God will pick you up. I wish I'd had her message taped so I could play it over and over again for my kids."

Randy Miller

Carla Senger, 18, Barren Ridge Church of the Brethren, Staunton, Va.: "It's nice to know that others go through the same anxieties you do. Hers were more serious than what most of us deal with."

Randy Miller

Jenni Dols, 17, Oakton Church of the Brethren, Vienna, Va.: "It was very moving—her personal story. People next to us were so moved they were crying. For people our age, suicide is a real issue. That's why her speech was so moving."


Jim Tomlonson

Jackie Snoots, Brownsville (Md.) Church of the Brethren: "She held the attention of our young people. She gave them something to think about. I felt sad listening to her. I remember the riots and destruction in Washington, D.C. [after Martin Luther King's death]. I remember driving through the city and seeing the destruction. I couldn't imagine how people could do that to other people. I admire her. I'm sure it was hard for her to grow up without her father. Such a loss."

Jim Tomlinson

Medema likes Brethren down-home gentleness

Ken Medema travels the world singing his original songs and entertaining audiences of all ages. He sang for NYC in 1990 and again in 1994, and has also performed at Annual Conference.

Ken was born blind, but sees more than most fully sighted people. If anyone knows what it means to see "with eyes of faith," it's this guy. We were lucky—again—that he consented to perform for us.

MESSENGER: "You've performed for many groups like this. Is there anything that sets Brethren youth apart?"

Medema: "This crowd probably has some of the most sound kingdom-of-God theology you'll find anywhere, with a faith and passion you don't commonly find among the more liberal churches. A lot of liberal churches have strong social concerns, but are spineless when it comes to enthusiasm. Here I find a wonderful combination of the two.

"It's taken this group a little longer to embrace some of the more contemporary Christian music. They're a little slower than, say, the Methodists or the Baptists in that regard. This group seems to be more careful, more thoughtful about embracing some of the new music. They don't just go rushing in. They take time to evaluate it. . . . Kind of a slow-but-certain approach.

"There's a 'down-home' kind of gentleness about this group that I really appreciate. I come across youth in other denominations who have seen it all, and I find them a little jaded, a little spoiled. They need more stuff to get them excited. This group is not like that. They can still get excited about someone shouting out the name of a state, and they can sing a capella. They don't need a lot of 'stuff' to get them excited."

What did youth think about Paul Grout?

Jeff Leard

Rachel Bucher, 17, Mount Wilson Church of the Brethren, Lebanon, Pa.: "Paul Grout was very moving. I had never thought about how we nailed Jesus to the cross. I liked where he told us that Jesus loves us, which gives us self-esteem. I think his presentation will change me because I now know how special I am. I can be unafraid to stand up for Christ."

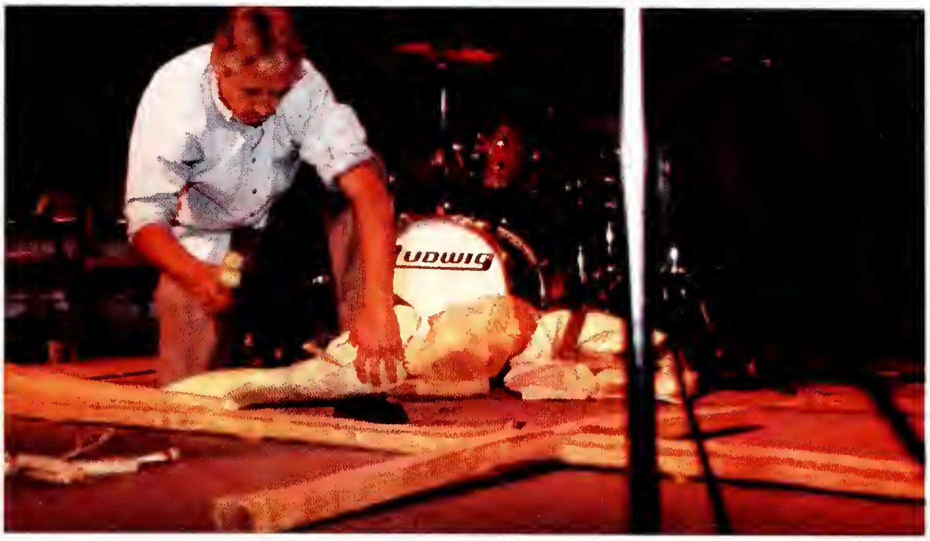
Jeff Leard

Valerie Taft, Middlebury (Ind.) Church of the Brethren: "At first, I didn't think he looked like much fun. He was older and seemed really serious and traditional. I thought he was going to get up there and say something like, 'This is what I say about this and you should believe it.' But he was really good. Right now, after hearing him, I feel better than I ever thought I would."

Jeff Leard

Nick Juday, 17, Waterford Community Church, Goshen, Ind.: "That was the most unbelievable thing I've ever seen in my life. Nothing ever made sense or hit me like this before. This guy really knows God

Transfixed by the Crucifix



Jim Tomlinson

Wednesday evening. The songs have been sung, the prayers prayed. Paul Grout, pastor of the Genesis Church of the Brethren in Putney, Vt., the evening speaker, is getting to work.

Shirtsleeves rolled up above his elbows, Paul hauls a long white canvas bag onto the stage and begins to unpack it. He s nowhere near the lectern, and he does not look like he's planning to speak. He lays the contents of the bag—a bunch f wood pieces—out on the floor. Then he begins pounding on them, using wooden pegs to tap pieces into place.

Tap, tap, tap. The arena is silent except for some guy in the osebleed section who shouts, "Preach it, Paul." Paul ignores im and continues tapping. David Sollenberger, video amera in hand, is now on stage, and soon we see an image f Paul projected onto the two huge screens flanking the tage. There it is, a little wood figure that looks kind of like it ould be Jesus. Yep, there is something that looks vaguely ross-like about what is taking shape up there.

Tap, tap, tap. He works on this thing for a good 10 to 15 minutes. Moby Arena is spellbound. Finally, Paul lays his ammer aside and raises the cross, slowly, slowly. He raises it until it is vertical. Then he lifts it, straining under the weight of the thing, and struggling to hold it upright, the way circus jugglers struggle to balance poles in their acts. The crucifix is at least 20 feet tall. Paul teeters a few times, steps quickly backwards, then steadies himself. At last, he sinks the thing into the wooden base he had placed on stage earlier. The crowd sighs audibly, then erupts in cheers. Dozens of cameras flash. Jesus didn't fall over after all. Everyone is relieved.

(Actually, he did, less than an hour before the service began. Twenty feet of wooden crucifix went crashing to the Moby Arena stage, barely missing evening worship coordinator Jim Chinworth, who wondered how on earth the show would ever go on. Not to worry. It was only the wooden pegs that broke, and Paul fished new ones from somewhere in the depths of his canvas bag.)

Having finished his building, Paul takes to the lectern, still shaken from the workout. "I'm always nervous when I do that," he tells the crowd. "When I stop being nervous I will no longer do it. I get nervous because when I do it I feel like I am nailing Christ to the cross.

"My goal," he continued, "is to make you see this cross and understand how Jesus had to let his crucifixion happen."

Maria King, 18, West York Church of the Brethren, York, Pa.: "What moved me was what he said about how we were blind but now we see. And how, even if we're afraid, he's with us and comforts us. . . .

"I've always wanted to help people. Sometimes people at our church say to us, 'Oh, you're too young,' as if we really aren't capable of doing much. But we have so much energy. And here at NYC we have all these people behind us. I'm not afraid to take what I've learned back to my church."

Jeff Leard

Leah Werner, 16, Waterford Community Church, Goshen, Ind.: Just seeing everybody crying, being touched, you know something happened tonight. A lot of kids from our youth group came down here [for the altar call]. They were crying. Our youth group wasn't really alive before tonight, but I think it's going to be different now. I know I've changed. I just want to know God better."

Worship services to remember

Photos by Jeff Leard

Ten worship services in five days is an impressive number for anyone, much less for a segment of the population not usually known for its enthusiastic response to an hour of worship a week. But then these weren't your typical Sunday morning worship services.

In addition to Paul Grout and Bernice King, NYCers were led in worship by Paul Mundey, pastor at Frederick, Md.; the three NYC staff members, Brian Yoder, Joy Struble, and Emily Shonk (pictured on page 23); Ted and Lee, a Mennonite drama team; Judy Mills Reimer, executive director of the General Board (picured on page 17); youth speech contest winners Linetta Alley and Cindy Laprade; Milton Garcia, a Church of the Brethren minister from Puerto Rico; Debbie Eisenbise, co-pastor of Skyridge Church of the Brethren, Kalamazoo, Mich.; and David Radcliff, director of Brethren Witness for the General Board.

Paul Mundey

"Don't just party this week. Participate in finding God's purpose in your life. Lean on others, especially this week, and soak up their support and encouragement."

Linetta Alley

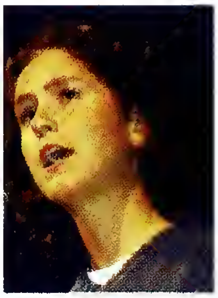
"We may not know what's in store for us, but we can only get this information if we keep [moving foward], and seeing with eyes of faith."

Debbie Eisenbise

Eisenbise portrayed blind Bartimaeus as a way to set the stage for the Saturday evening anointing service. The oil flowed, as did tears, amid hugs and a renewed conviction to see the world through eyes of faith. Said Tyler Montgomery, 18, of Bedford (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, "I can't fully explain this experience. It was like a lightning bolt. I'm not one to share my feelings, but I had chills running up and down my spine pretty much the whole night."

Milton Garcia

"Take time today to name the demons that surround you and cast them away, so that when you go back to your communities, you can be a witness to the Lord Jesus Christ."



Cindy Laprade

"When we put our faith in him, we can feel his presence. We need to take a leap of faith and fall into God's outstretched arms."

David Radcliff

"God doesn't want you just to go to church. God wants you to be the church."

Ted and Lee

Professional Gospel Goofballs

Scripture meets Saturday Night Live. "Ted and Lee were really fun," said Reanie Conrad, 14, Bush Creek Church of the Brethren, Brunswick, Md. "They make you understand things better. Pastors are usually talking to adults. Ted and Lee made scripture understandable here, for us."

Are my kids safe?

Parents who've just sent their pride and joy off to a conference with the same acronym as America's most dangerous city naturally want to know that their children are safe and that they will be having meaningful spiritual experiences at NYC. They also want to know that they are eating their vegetables, getting enough sleep, and generally behaving themselves.

Having witnessed the most recent conference first-hand, I can address some of their concerns.

No one got more than three hours of sleep a night. And the advisors got less because they had to stay awake to make sure that the youth bellowing coyote hoots between dormitories at curfew were not actually causing themselves or others physical harm. I saw four youth eat vegetables, but this was early in the week. My guess is that they were still homesick, and eating vegetables made them feel more like they were still at home. By the end of the conference, the cafeteria staff had removed most healthful items from the menu. By Saturday, pizza delivery trucks became the most frequently sighted vehicles on campus.

Parents want their kids to have deep, life-changing spiritual experiences at NYC, but not too deep, and not so life-changing that they feel suddenly compelled to book reservations for a shuttle to the next comet that passes by the planet, a la Heaven's Gate. Thankfully, this NYC seemed to get the mix just right, providing something for everyone.

Brethren Revival Fellowship pillar Jim Myer began each day with a half-hour Bible study in Moby Arena. Volunteer staff member Kimber Mitchell brought the gospel to NYCers via grease paint, goofy wigs, and clothes that looked like . . . well, like what some youth found at a nearby thrift store. It came via music from the folk group Kindling (who did *not* sing "Light My Fire"), the Top-40 band Jars of Clay, and the NYC theme song from Lee Krähenbühl.

Sometimes the spirit came through when least expected. NYC counselor John Wenger told about a girl he spotted coming out of Moby Arena following the Wednesday evening worship, at which Paul Grout had spoken. "She was a tall, beautiful blonde girl, and she was sobbing," he said. "I asked her what was wrong, but she was crying so hard she couldn't tell me. I invited her to come to the counseling center, so we walked across the street to Durrell Center and sat in my office until she calmed down. When she was able to speak, she said, 'I've been an athlete all my life. I play volleyball, and I always thought people liked me because I was a good athlete. But tonight at the worship service, I found out that people love me for who I am.' I hear all kinds of stories, but that one really made my week."

At the Sunday morning worship service, David Radcliff encouraged the youth to carry home with them what they had experienced at NYC. "I hope what you have seen and felt this week will take you to higher ground, where you can see more clearly. And when you get home, you can tell those folks at your church that they got a good return on the investment they made on all that spaghetti they ate."

This week in Ft. Collins, your youth ate well enough, did not injure themselves beyond repair, and seemed to leave with their spiritual batteries fully charged. No one was talking about hitching their wagon to a star—or comet—as they boarded their buses for home on Sunday. But most, if not all, were different people from the ones who had arrived at NYC five days before. What more could a parent hope for?

Notes from the big picture

eard

Sweltering heat. No breeze. Where's my sunscreen?

More than 4,500 young people are sitting in a pie-shaped (well, kind of) wedge in front of scaffolding holding a few photographers and their assistants. A man with an achingly twangy "Missourah" accent is down on the grass shouting way-too-loud instructions over a way-too-loud P.A. system.

"Sit down, all you in the yellow shirts," Missourah hollered. "You, in the Hawaiian shirt, sit down. We're all waiting on you." Hawaiian Shirt shouts back, "Allergies." He didn't want to get his nose too close to the grass until the last minute, and it took a good 45 of those to get to the "gang's all here" stage and begin smiling for the camera.

Finally, the gang got close enough into position enough to satisfy Missourah Accent.

"On three," Missourah twanged. "Take off your hats and sunglasses." Okay on the hats, but the squinty sun made most people keep their sunglasses perched on their noses.

Days from now, when the 10-x-16s are in their hands, NYCers will only be able to spot themselves by the color of their T-shirts anyway, and their general position in the big pie wedge. But the memory of being together will last for years.

Jeff Leard

BVS @ NYC

Brethren Volunteer Service director Dan McFadden introduces Orientation Unit 229 to NYCers Thursday evening. As part of their orientation, unit members participated in various leadership duties diring the conference. This was the first time a BVS unit has participated in NYC as part of orientation. McFadden invited NYCers to consider BVS in their future. "If you give a year of your life to BVS, it will change you, no matter what profession you enter."

Jim Tomlinson

Where's the honeymoon dorm?

"We're celebrities now," 20-year-old Aurora Rubio de Garcia said, laughing. She and Saul Garcia, 21, her husband of barely two weeks, had been featured in Thursday's NYC newsletter, Insight. "Many people whom we've never seen come up to us and wish us congratulations. We often don't understand what they are saying, but they are always very nice."

Saturday morning NYC speaker Milton Garcia, of Puerto Rico, interpreted for the couple as they retreated from the summer heat in the comfort of the NYC press room. They had arrived in Ft. Collins on Tuesday from Tijuana, via Southern California's Bella Vista and La Verne congregations. They began their journey at Tijuana's Shalom Ministries, where Saul is minister of transportation, and for which Friday's NYC offering was designated.

After 26 hours on a bus with some 45 youth and advisors, Saul and Aurora picked up their bags and went separate ways: she to a girls' dorm, he with the guys. And this is how they chose to spend their honeymoon?

"We knew we'd be sleeping in separate quarters this week," Saul explained. "But we still wanted to come here."

"This is the beginning of our married life," Aurora added. "This is where we are building our foundation. So, in the future, when we have differences, we can reflect on this special experience. We feel like we are starting in the right direction."

Wearing powder-blue NYC T-shirts and holding hands, the newlyweds said that what they have encountered at CSU was different from what they had expected.

"A friend told us that it would be a camp with 5,000 people," Saul said. "We thought it might be held in tents. We were surprised when we got here to this big university."

In addition to the physical layout, the experience itself had exceeded their expectations by midweek.

"I've really appreciated the warmth of the people," Aurora said, "and the feeling during the worship services."

Not to rush them into things, but would they tell their future children to attend NYC?

"Of course," Saul said. "I would tell them that they would have a good time. And I would tell them to expect to be strengthened spiritually, and to have their commitment deepened."

What I hope for these youth

Judy Mills Reimer, a former BVSer and Annual Conference moderator who was recently installed as executive director of the Church of the Brethren General Board, is billed at NYC as a "cheerleader for youth in the church." Chatting informally at the Tuesday evening picnic, she talked about what she hoped young people would take with them from the conference.

"I hope that they will come away with a deepened sense of their own spirituality, plus an appreciation for the church at large. So that when they leave here they will carry with them an understanding that we all need to work together."

Randy Miller

Randy Miller

Randy Miller

↗ Ben Herr, 16, Walnut Grove Church of the Brethren, Johnstown, Pa., joins Wendy Driver, 15, Montezuma church, Staunton, Va., in tacking shingles to the roof of one of the Habitat for Humanity houses.

↙ Pete Barlow, 16, of the Montezuma church, joins Ben and Wendy in tacking shingles.

Building Habitat houses

If you build it, they will come.

Actually, if you just lay the foundation, they will come, hammers in hand, tool belts around their waists.

Dozens of them did come to the Moby Arena parking lot, ready to work on two Habitat for Humanity houses as part of the service projects offered at NYC. And they all looked very impressive, in a "Tim, The Tool Man, Taylor" sort of way.

And, guess what? In three days (sounds vaguely biblical, doesn't it?), they built the darned things. All those years fooling around with Legos paid off.

Building the Habitat houses was one of several service projects to which youth could donate a few hours a day. Money from two anonymous donors—$60,000—funded the NYC Habitat project. Shifts ran from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. each day. And, rain or shine, they pounded, sawed, shingled, and tacked.

Under cloudy skies on Friday afternoon, 16-year-old Ben Herr, of the Walnut Grove (Pa.)congregation, took a break from nailing shingles to talk about why he chose to work on the project. "I do a lot of this for my dad. I love it. I'm just signed up for today, but I'd like to do more. I like helping out on this project. Maybe I'll sign up for tomorrow."

Saturday morning, amid smiles and tears, new owners Rita and Javier Loya, along with Felisita Montanez and her four sons, were presented their Habitat homes. Asked how he felt about moving into a house built by a bunch of teenagers, Javier smiled and said, "At first I didn't believe they could do it. But they did."

The homes will be moved from the Moby parking lot to the nearby town of Severence, where they will receive finishing touches in the weeks ahead.

Jeff Leard

Lt. Jeff Booth, based in Cheyenne, is greeted by NYCers following the Brethren demonstration at the missile silo launch site.

Peace vigil

Wednesday afternoon, the Brethren Witness office sponsored a peace demonstration at the site of a missile silo an hour northeast of Colorado State University. David Radcliff, NYC Sunday morning speaker, and director of Brethren Witness for the General Board, coordinated the visit.

Youth gathered in rain-soaked grass across a gravel road from the silo. Linetta Alley, Rachel Carroll and Lori Van Order, members of the Brethren Youth Peace Travel Team, led the group in singing "One Tin Soldier" to begin the demonstration. Costa Nicolaidis, legislative associate in the Church of the Brethren Washington office, spoke to the group about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and encouraged them to write letters to their senators and representatives voicing their concerns about it.

Participants were given handfuls of grass seed, which they tossed toward the silo launch site as a demonstration of the power of life over the forces of death.

As they left the site, individuals greeted surprised soldiers guarding the site with hugs and handshakes.

—Melissa Collett

YOUTH
comment about the week

Photos by Randy Miller

Aspen Di Ioli, 16, La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren: "This week was great. I liked seeing how everybody came together. Everyone was really close during the conference. It was fun to meet new people who suddenly acted like your best friends."

Amanda Adjetey, 15, Dayton (Va.) Church of the Brethren: "The week, overall, has been great. I had more experiences than I thought I would: small groups, workshops, worship services. I especially appreciated the worship services. Paul Grout and Bernice King really stood out for me."

Sam Barns, Locust Grove (Ind.) Church of the Brethren: "One thing I noticed here at NYC was that the youth and advisors are very friendly. They don't just walk past you. They say 'Hi!' There ain't no loners here, like at school. Nobody's picking on people or making fun of them. Even though you don't know each other, you start talking and become friends. I've made a lot of friends here."

Jamee Eriksen, 17, Dayton (Va.) Church of the Brethren: For me, this week was more like a road sign than a door. It was symbolic of where my journey is going to start. It was like a starting point. When I was baptized, I had a lot of questions and issues to deal with. I came here to learn more about who I am and where I'm going."

Jars of Clay bring kettles of tunes

Photos by Randy Miller

Jars of Clay brought barrels of fun, buckets of harmony, jugs of laughs and kettles of tunes Saturday night when they played to a packed Moby Arena. The popular Top-40 band, whose hit song, "Flood," from their self-titled debut album, catapulted them from the confines of Christian audiences to mainstream listeners, met with a receptive crowd at NYC. No, receptive is not the right word. Enthusiastic? Maybe. Giddy? Closer. On the edge of their homemade pillows in nail-biting anticipation? Yes.

The youth were not disappointed. Jars of Clay kicked off their show in high gear and never let up. Although some of their musical influences—the Beatles, Peter Gabriel, the Beach Boys—were evident in their tunes, they definitely have their own sound, rich in layered harmonies, lilting melodies, and a driving beat. With two albums under their belts, a hit song on the charts, and enough pull to open for the likes of Sting, one might wonder how the little old Church of the Brethren ever snagged them.

"Persistence," explained NYC coordinator Brian Yoder. "I just kept calling and calling until they finally called me back."

But surely they're used to playing bigger venues than NYC. Why would they include a little group like this one on their tour?

"Actually, this one's fairly big," said lead guitarist Stephen Mason, as he puttered around the stage in frayed blue jeans, Nikes and a T-shirt, hours before the concert. "We play at colleges and youth conferences fairly often."

Still, for a band that has enjoyed such critical and commercial success in a relatively short time, one could imagine that their hat sizes might have increased an inch or two. Not so. Instead, they seem remarkably normal for rock stars—or for anyone.

"They even grabbed their own luggage off the carousel," said Shawn Replogle, one of the NYC staff who met the band at the Colorado airport. "They seemed very appreciative of the welcome we gave them."

Sitting in folding chairs in a vacant hallway backstage before the concert, Steve and singer Dan Haseltine talked about their spiritual influences, and about how the band got started.

"Dan, [keyboardist] Charlie [Lowell] and I were roommates at Greenville (Ill.) College," Steve said. All of the band members grew up in Christian homes, and the types of songs they wrote grew out of their spiritual orientation. Today, do they see their music as a form of ministry, or is it more just a performance?

"Being a Christian, everything in life is a ministry," Steve responded. "Our music is part of our walk with the Lord."

When asked about the origins of their hit song, "Flood," Dan said, "We started writing that song in college. It is a metaphor for sin and how we can drown ourselves in sin. It's really a prayer to be lifted out of that situation."

The name of their band, too, is a metaphor, as Dan explained later on stage in Moby Arena. It is drawn from 2 Corinthians 4:7, in which the Apostle Paul talks about how " we have this treasure [God's spirit] in earthen vessels [our bodies]. . . ."

Dan says he hopes Jars of Clay can help serve as a catalyst for other Christian bands to cross over into the mainstream of popular music.

"I think the Christian community has isolated itself from the world," he said. "We need to be part of it in order to influence it."

Saturday night at NYC, they definitely influenced 4,524 young people and their advisors.

Randy Miller

Randy Miller

Randy Miller

One of the dozens of service projects youth signed up for was cleaning and sorting thousands of eyeglasses donated for shipment to El Salvador. Here NYCers don specs for the camera.

Michelle Keim, Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren, Fort Wayne, Ind. "These are weird. I think my dad has some like this."

Chris Harmon, of the Greenhill Church of the Brethren, West Dover, Md., uses an old toothbrush to scrub specs.

Making spectacles of themselves

How to spend your afternoons at NYC? Let me count the ways. There were—how did Lincoln put it?—at least four score workshops or service projects from which to choose.

Among them: Eeyore's Birthday Party (are we having fun yet?); Do We Have Faith in Washington? (they were serious about this); Brethren Youth Dating in the 21st Century (why rush into things—wait till the next millennium); The Gospel of Sex (wait a minute . . . I think my Bible is missing a chapter), and Mountain Dew for the Soul (Pepsi for the spirit?).

Several dozen youth spent their afternoons cleaning glasses under the shelter of the Moby Arena overhang. More than 4,602 were donated in a special offering during the Wednesday evening worship service. Most needed a good overhaul, and youth turned out in droves to pick up toothbrushes and scrub specs in tubs of sudsy water.

An added incentive to do this was the afternoon downpour that discouraged participation in other activities scheduled for the great outdoors. On Friday, there must have been three dozen youth sorting, scrubbing, and generally goofing around, trying on glasses, many of which had been around since the Howdy Doody days. Guys wound up looking like Buddy Holly; girls, like Lisa Loeb. For some, the improvement in appearance was astonishing and immediate.

Nuts and bolts

The smaller the denomination, the more important quantification seems to be. How many of us Brethren are there? Where are we located? What is our background? How come 99.999 percent of us live in Pennsylvania?

If you're under 19, numbers don't really matter. You get home from NYC. They ask at your church, "How was it?" You tell them, "Cool. There were like tons of people from all over." What more do you need to say?

But older folks like numbers. Fooling around with numbers gives them something to do (exhibit A: Annual Conference). They like numbers almost always except when talking about their age. Anyway, you were there. You know there were tons of people and most of them were just like you, or at least they acted like they wanted to be just like you. For those who weren't there—and those over 19—here are the numbers:

—This was the biggest gathering of Brethren in one place since the 1996 Annual Conference; 4,524 attended this NYC (okay, this includes advisors—but they are very young in their thinking). They came from 39 states, Germany, Croatia, Mexico, El Salvador, and Puerto Rico. The ones from Germany were especially impressed with the efficiency of the organization during registration.

—Every NYC is bigger than the last. In 1982, 3,000 attended the conference; in 1986: 3,300; in 1990: 3,500; in 1994: 4,120. This year, more people attended NYC than attended Annual Conference. Membership in the church at large keeps declining, but our youth keep coming to these things. Maybe there's hope for us after all.

—A grand total of 1,370 youth and advisors traveled by whatever means possible from Pennsylvania to Colorado. This might sound like something to brag about unless you've spent a summer in Pennsylvania.

Jeff Leard

Frank Klein

Jeff Leard

▲ ▲ ▲ Two friends share shelter from the weather.

▲ ▲ NYC nurse Sharon Stephens tends to a blister.

▲ NYCers gather for their daily small group session.

—One person came from each of the following states: Georgia, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Nevada, and Wisconsin. These states may be better vacation spots than most of us have given them credit for. No one wants to leave, even to come to NYC.

—Fifty-one youth, advisors and staff came from Frederick, Md.—the most from any single church. They deserve something for this, don't you think? How about a mention in MESSENGER? There, that's done.

—Belly-up to the buffet: NYCers ate 81,432 meals during their week at Colorado State University. Most of these were consumed in the campus cafeterias, despite the menu. However, a good many were eaten out of cardboard boxes, courtesy of Papa John's Pizza. Those delivered after the 12 a.m. curfew were taken care of handily by those on the NYC staff who were foolish enough to be up at that hour.

—Digging deep: Youth and advisors coughed up $10,013 for Shalom Ministries in Tijuana, 4,602 pairs of eyeglasses for shipping to El Salvador, and $7,482 for the NYC scholarship fund. They also lugged 2,412 pounds of canned goods to Ft. Collins for the Larimer County Food Distribution Center. (Unfortunately, no one thought to donate a can opener.)

—Sprains, strains and general funk: During the week, 259 people called on the medical services staff for sprains, strains, stomach viruses, and colds. Would they have fared better had they been at home? How dangerous is it to be a couch potato in Northern Ohio in July? Of course they're going to bang themselves up when they hit the Rockies. It comes with the territory. Besides, after they see the NYC nurses, they get to impress their friends with Barney stickers when they leave the dispensary.

—Some 3,800 NYCers traveled to Rocky Mountain National Park to hike in the wilderness.

Goodbye NYC

eff Leard

Randy Miller

Randy Miller

Jim Tomlonson

Jeff Leard

Jim Tomlonson

Behind the scenes

National Youth Conference was created by the NYC steering committee and a volunteer staff of three—coordinator Brian Yoder and assistant coordinators Joy Struble and Emily Shonk. The three shared personally about their faith journeys during the Wednesday morning worship service.

Jeff Leard

NYC
OREGON
WASHINGTON

Jim Tomlinson

How to bring NYC home

NYC worship services are just like church services back home, except that they're about a hundred times bigger, and they're fun.

A quick glance at the crowd assembled in Moby Arena at any NYC worship leads one to conclude that at these services you get to wear anything you want, you can bring snacks (Ted and Lee found plenty when they tried to feed the 5,000 during the Thursday morning worship) and, instead of sitting on hard pews, you get to slouch on the floor on pillows—some the size of chaise lounge cushions. Plus, if you stick around afterwards, you get a rock concert. Who wouldn't want to go to a church that looks to some like one big slumber party?

How can churches back home compete with that? Must they rip out their pews, provide pillows for everyone, hand out snacks, book Jars of Clay, and invest in an audio-visual system that would drain most district budgets?

NYCers sometimes are disappointed when they return home to the same ol' same ol' after their Colorado Rocky Mountain high. They naturally want to take home some of the great feelings and experiences they had at Ft. Collins. Folks at home are glad they had a good time, but sometimes find it difficult to grasp what their youth are trying to tell them.

There may be no quick or easy solutions to transporting the "NYC experience" back home, but a few NYCers already have come up with ideas about how to try to keep the spirit alive. Soon after arriving home, Wendi Hutchinson, former NYC coordinator, and eyeglasses cleaning director this time, wrote to the COB-L electronic Brethren chat line about her group's experience.

"I have been amazed at [our group's] enthusiasm," she wrote. "One youth is even passing up a trip to Disney World in order to be here on the 16th [for their group's report to the congregation]. They are so excited to share what they saw and heard at NYC.

"[Since this] was the largest Brethren gathering this year," she continued, "we should be talking about how to capture the energy and enthusiasm and spirit that filled Moby and share it with the whole denomination." As to how she and her group are going to try to keep that spirit alive at home, she said, "One response to this experience is that we are beginning a mid-week Bible study in addition to our regular youth meetings. Our hope is that this will help some of our youth . . . to keep the commitments they made at NYC."

Groups like Wendi's across the country, as well as Puerto Rico and maybe even Tijuana, will be presenting NYC reports to their home congregations in the weeks ahead. Hopefully, not too many churches will be forced to pull out their pews to satisfy their youth. There must be some middle ground where those back home and their newly on-fire youth can meet.

"I hope the adults [back home] will allow you the space to put into practice what you've learned here," Sunday morning speaker David Radcliff told NYCers in the final hour of their week together. "This generation is ready to lead the church into the future. If they are not allowed to do this, it will be their loss. But the greater loss will be to us as a church. The spirit is moving in these lives, and we squelch it at our peril."

How about this: The folks back home get to keep their pews and their budgets intact, but they have to promise not to squelch the NYC spirit. And NYCers get to wear their favorite jeans and bring pillows to church. (Sorry, no snacks.) Who knows, in a few weeks, you might even have the whole congregation tapping their toes and singing the NYC theme song.

> *I, alas, will have to go on being tolerant of those who disagree with my stand on these issues, on the basis of the very remote but real possibility that I might be wrong about something.*

Solution to pluralism

Aha! At last we know how to get all of those thorny issues settled which dwell in those distressingly gray areas causing so much dissension in our beloved church: Simply ask Dale Aukerman! [See "The problem with pluralism," July.]

He says all we have to do is go back to basic beliefs made quite clear in the New Testament. Apparently the clear and unarguable light of biblical truth shines on him and those who agree with his interpretation of scripture. The rest of us will wait in breathless anticipation until he tells us in unambiguous language what God has to say about homosexuality, abortion, and the use of fetal tissue.

In the meantime I, alas, will have to go on being tolerant of those who disagree with my stand on these issues, on the basis of the very remote but real possibility that I might be wrong about something.

Edward Huber
Philadelphia, Pa.

Aukerman on authority

I want to commend Dale Aukerman for his article in the July MESSENGER dealing with a major problem facing the Church of the Brethren. I encouraged all those in the worship service in the church I serve as interim pastor to study this article, and if they do not get MESSENGER regularly to borrow a copy so they can read it.

The core issue Dale was concerned about seems to me to be the most crucial, and the most critical, facing the Church of the Brethren today. Does Jesus still speak with authority to the Church of the Brethren? Is He still the author and the authority of our faith as Brethren?

As we observe our response as a denomination to Jesus' commission as given in Matthew 28:18-20, we do not see much evidence of interest in or enthusiasm for making disciples of all nations, or of any nation. There is not much evidence of Brethren congregations giving a high priority to the highest priority of Jesus, calling and making disciples, teaching them to know and do all that He had taught.

Denominational leaders as well as congregations and individual Brethren need to hear and heed the call of Brother Aukerman, and again allow Jesus to speak with authority to all of us. I pray that it may be so, and soon!

Olden D. Mitchell
North Manchester, Ind.

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Higher patriotism

Robert Saylor's thoughtful critique of our 1970 Annual Conference statement on war in the July MESSENGER deserves an answer. He proposes that Brethren statements be consistent with the US Constitution. From our beginnings, however, Brethren have given priority to their interpretations of the way of Jesus over human laws and authority. Though striving to be good citizens, whenever the demands of the state conflict with the life and teachings of Jesus, Brethren have endeavored to "obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:29).

By focusing primarily on constitutional support of military forces, he neglects the preamble's assertion that our government "promote the general welfare." If we truly love our country we will not want it to experience the fate of nations that have maintained huge military establishments in peacetime. This is what President

Eisenhower had in mind when he warned against the military-industrial complex and observed that every weapon made constitutes robbery of the poor. Militarism saps the strength of a nation.

Brethren can empathize with honoring those who have died in battles of our country. In treasuring stories of our heritage, however, we believe we have gained our religious freedom and the choice of conscientious objection because our forebears were willing to die or go to prison by refusing to train to kill or to kill. Nations, including our own, only granted the status of conscientious objection when pressured to stop persecuting and grant alternative service to exemplary citizens.

Brother Saylor regrets the absence of the "just war concept," which holds that war is permissible under certain conditions. However, none of the major 20th-century wars can be justified by classical just war theories primarily because they have involved killing large numbers of innocent civilians.

To correct the notion of an "overwhelming share of our federal taxes" going to the military, he contrasts the $250 billion defense budget with the $300 billion interest on the national debt. He fails to acknowledge that large portions of this interest are due to exorbitant expenditures during the nuclear arms race in the 1980s.

I could approve Saylor's desire to amend the US Constitution. It probably would be impossible for the most powerful and wealthy nation to abolish the notion of war as a way to settle differences. But we could focus on a proposal that much greater energy and money be devoted to appropriating knowledge of mediation, conflict resolution, diplomacy, and other nonviolent ways to reduce and hopefully eliminate the prevailing reliance on weapons of mass destruction.

Finally, John Kline's diary offers a wonderful definition of higher patriotism. Rather than firing cannons or rehearsing past battles, he believes a higher conception of love for country to be found in a person who loves God and neighbor. From this spring subordinate love for one's country, companions, relatives, and friends and takes in the whole human family.

Dale W. Brown
Elizabethtown, Pa.

P.S. I recommend to Brother Saylor and others the 1991 statement of Annual Conference: "Peacemaking: The Calling of God's People in History."

The military and the choice

Robert Saylor's letter [July] makes very clear the conflict between the 1970 "Statement of the Church of the Brethren on War" and the US Constitution. He is in good company with that understanding of the conflict

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between the reign of God and the reign of the powers.

Jesus tells us, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies. . . " (Matt. 5:43-44). Paul encourages us to not be conformed to this world but to "be transformed by the renewing of your minds. . . " (Rom. 12:2). All three are making very clear that there is a choice to be made: Will we serve God or will we serve other powers?

I suspect we would be in agreement that there is a cost that comes with our choice. But I would disagree that there is a resolution between the church's statement on war and Saylor's understanding that the US Constitution calls for a military defense.

I would understand it much as the choice presented by Moses to the Hebrews about to cross into the promised land: "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life. . . " (Deut. 30:19-20). I think the Brethren choose the way of Jesus.

Cliff Kindy
North Manchester, Ind.

Communion Bread 101

Our baking of communion bread here in Garden City, Kan., is a bit different than that described in MESSENGER. [See Brethrening, "Communion Bread 101," in June MESSENGER.]

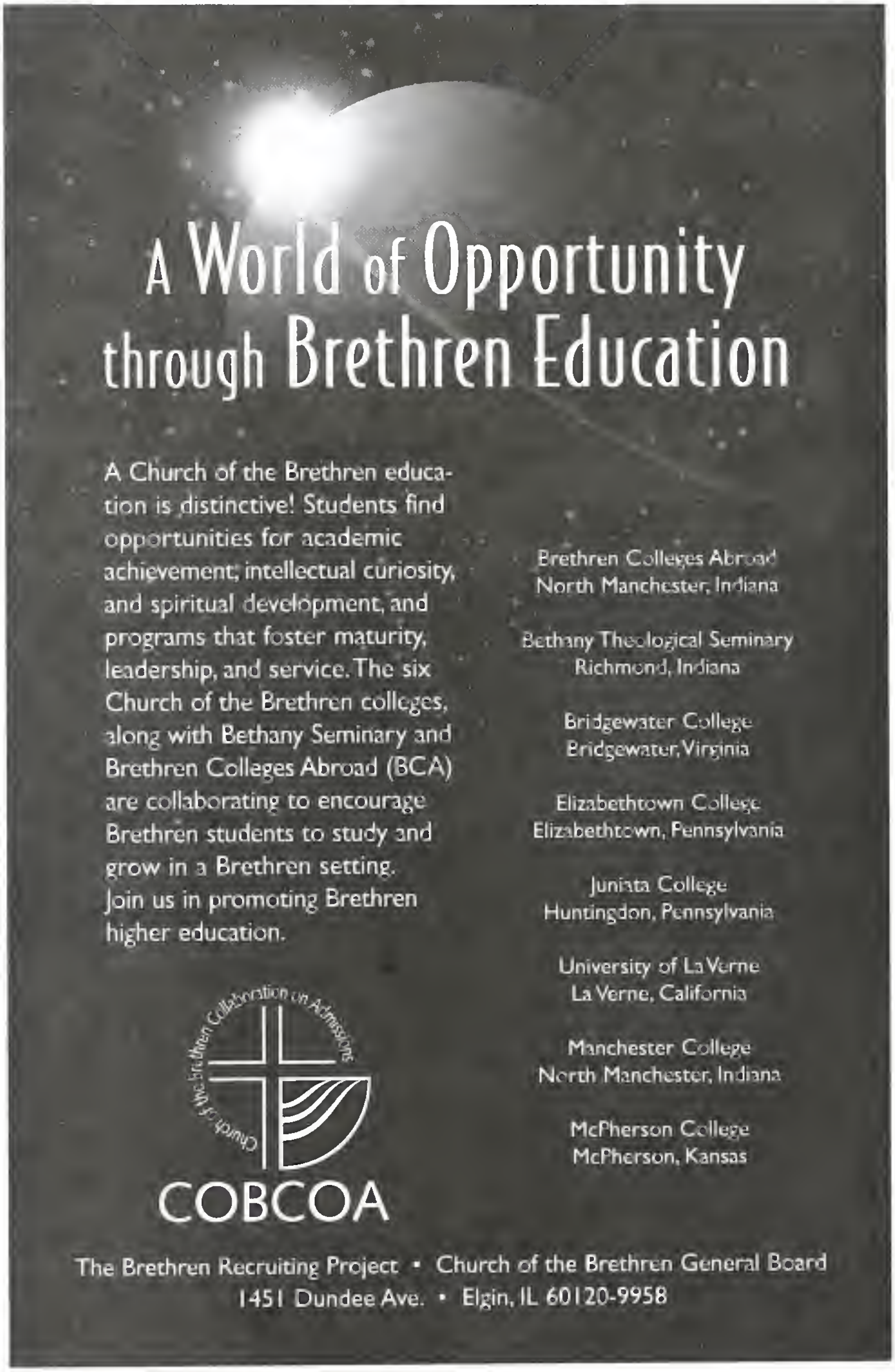
Each new deacon lady is given a written page of how the bread is made—how and what to put on the table and how to cook the meats. As the bread represents the Lord's body, we use only the best ingredients—pure butter and heavy whipping cream. After it is mixed, we divide it into three equal parts to knead. We pass it from one lady to the next one several times. This is because everyone's hands are not all the same temperature and all do not knead it the same, so this helps the bread to be more all the same.

The bread is cut with a sharp knife after about 30 minutes of kneading to see if it is ready to roll out. If there are no bubbles and the bread is smooth we then roll it. If there are bubbles we knead it more and then check it again. We use special cookie sheets that we don't use for anything else.

We measure by width of ruler length and four inches crosswise. The four inches is two servings. A cross is made on each serving with five pierces each way. The five pierces represent the five pierces of Jesus' body. We don't toss the bread or poke it. It is kneaded gently as it represents the Lord's body. The bread is watched closely while cooking and when done is cut into two-piece servings to break with another person.

I might add that while we do this there is no coffee break, no gossiping.

Deacon ladies
Garden City Church of the Brethren
Garden City, Kan.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Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

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Huntingdon, Pennsylvania

University of La Verne
La Verne, California

Manchester College
North Manchester, Indiana

McPherson College
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Letters

Seminary sadness

If it is true, as the cover on the June MESSENGER states, that "The seminary is on solid ground again," that obviously is cause for rejoicing. However, for some of us who have been intimately involved with Bethany Theological Seminary over the years, it is also a time of deep sadness. The current status of Bethany was not achieved without considerable anguish, and some painful lessons of which the church should be aware when other major decisions face the denomination.

I write as the chairman of the building committee for the Oak Brook campus, and it is from that perspective that I offer the following:

1. Regarding the financial crisis that triggered the move to Richmond, Ind., the seminary administration, and especially the board of directors, must bear responsibility for not addressing the problem sooner. Had they done so, the move might not have been necessary.

2. When the Bethany board was struggling with the issue of whether to remain at Oak Brook or move, several of us offered what we felt were creative solutions to resolve the financial needs of the seminary and still allow it to remain at Oak Brook. These options were never seriously considered by the Bethany board.

3. I was a member of the Bethany board when the decision was made by Annual Conference to move from Chicago to the Oak Brook campus. As a board, we felt we had a legal right to make that decision without Conference action, but also that we had a moral and ethical obligation to consult Annual Conference. That was done, and the Conference confirmed the board's recommendation that Bethany move to a new location. The overwhelming support of Annual Conference was a tremendous affirmation of the board's research and its eventual recommendation. As we moved to build the new campus at Oak Brook we felt we had the backing of the entire church.

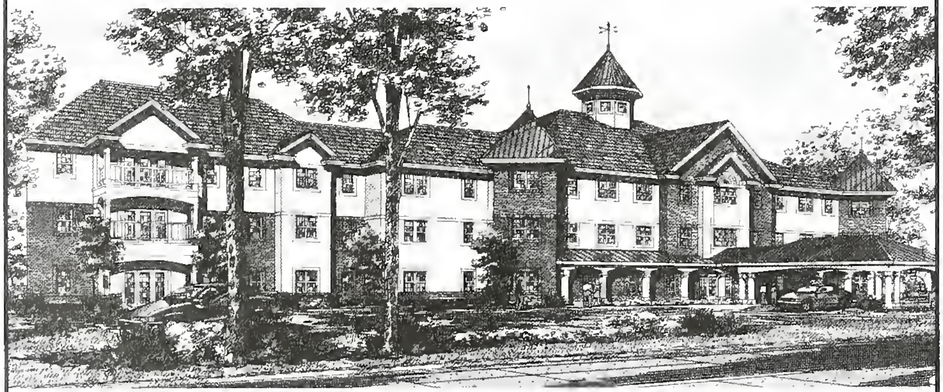
4. I feel now, as others do, that the Bethany board, in its push to move from Oak Brook, made that decision without full discussion and a decision from the delegate body of Annual Conference.

5. The process by which that decision was made has alienated some very fine Brethren. This has resulted in some loss of financial support for Bethany from these people, and more to the point, a feeling that the Bethany board has been insensitive to the hurt and negative feelings engendered by the move to Richmond.

6. Some of my friends from other denominations have expressed to me their dismay over the Brethren leaving what they considered to be one of the most exciting and creative theological settings in America, with the accompanying benefit of proximity to other seminaries in the theological center of America.

Some will say this is "sour grapes" on my part, but I felt in all fairness this needed to be said on behalf of all those Brethren who still do not understand the rationale and the process by which this major relocation of an important church institution was made.

Dean L. Frantz
New Haven, Ind.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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Lottery is Satan's hope

I would like to say two things to religious people who support the lottery by purchasing tickets.

First, the lottery gives hope to sinners who had no hope except to repent of their sinful ways and turn to God. Sinners are putting off the decision to turn to God, hoping they will hit the big one on Wednesday or Saturday. I call the lottery Satan's hope, because it has opposed evangelism, social change, character development, and virtue.

Second, playing the lottery is poor

stewardship, and those guilty of poor stewardship need not expect the financial blessings of God. Either your faith is in God's blessings or it is in a chance to be struck by lightning.

C. Gregory Dukes
National Alliance of Evangelicals to Stop the Lottery
Mooresville, Ind.

First-time conferencegoer

I thank all of the 1998 Annual Conference organizers for their hard work and preparation. As a first-time participant and delegate, it surprised me to find business proceeding as quickly and efficiently as it did. I think that the Conference staff did an excellent job!

I gratefully acknowledge the Lake Charles (La.) Community Church of the Brethren for sending me as a delegate. This was our church's first opportunity to send a delegate other than our pastor, Manny Diaz, to Annual Conference. Even though our church is five years young, we do have approximately 80 signed members with an average attendance on Sunday of over 100 people. This would not have been accomplished without the loving support of the Chiques church in Manheim, Pa., the Roanoke, La., church, the New Church Start Committee, and others throughout the Brotherhood.

I have some thoughts about some of the issues brought out at Conference.

- The words "pluralism" and "diversity" seemed to be cast in a negative light. The implication was that if we embrace pluralism or diversity, then we are accepting an "anything goes," or even a "laissez-faire" mentality. Pluralism, in one instance, was even equated with "polytheism"! To me, pluralism and diversity simply reflect the reality of today's world. We are many in the Body of Christ. We represent many functions and views. If we expect everyone to believe, to act, to look, and to speak like ourselves, we will be sorely disappointed.
- I appreciate the query process in the development and study of the position of the church on different matters. However, it seems to me that there needs to be a more efficient, effective way of dealing with technological issues. Technology changes on a daily or weekly basis. Responses that come years after the initial query are outdated.
- I am impressed and excited by the Association of Brethren Caregivers and the On Earth Peace Assembly. These two groups will take the Church of the Brethren into new communities and introduce Christ's love and compassion to new groups. What an amazing opportunity!

Don S. Self
Associate pastor, Lake Charles Community Church of the Brethren
Lake Charles, La.

Wake up to Holy Spirit

James D. Kessler stated some good points in his letter in the May Messenger. I intentionally waited for a couple of issues to see if anyone would follow up on Kessler's concerns. No one did. Maybe I should not be surprised. For the past two decades it has been very clear to me why the Church of the Brethren has lost membership, leadership, and vitality.

The Holy Spirit has not fully been invited into the church. We baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We say our creed is the New Testament, but what do we do with the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12)? Can we not accept the power, prophecy, and miracles manifested by the Spirit? Or do we write them off by saying they were for yesterday? In the last days the Holy Spirit will be poured out (Joel 2:28). Indications are that time is upon us.

For two years in the early 1980s our young family relocated to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia for economic reasons. We ended up attending a charismatic church where we grew spiritually by leaps and bounds. Fully one half of the congregation there were former Church of the Brethren members.

In 1994 our son entered Bridgewater College. He attended a local charismatic church where he was surprised to find all 10 in the college-age youth group were from Church of the Brethren backgrounds. Some of our best young leadership is drawn to services where there is exuberant praise and worship, prophecy comes forth, tongues and interpretations are uttered, and healings are expected and do take place. Some serious needs are met. Can the Church of the Brethren invite in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Kessler is right in stating, "It is time to awake from our slumber."

Will our pastors continue in the traditional church service, to please men and let the church slumber? Or will they take a risk, invite the Holy Spirit in, and see the power of God meet needs in a dynamic and growing church? The Church of the Brethren is at a crossroads. Will we accept the offered gifts of the Spirit or are we ashamed of them? Which direction will our members and pastors choose for the Church of the Brethren?

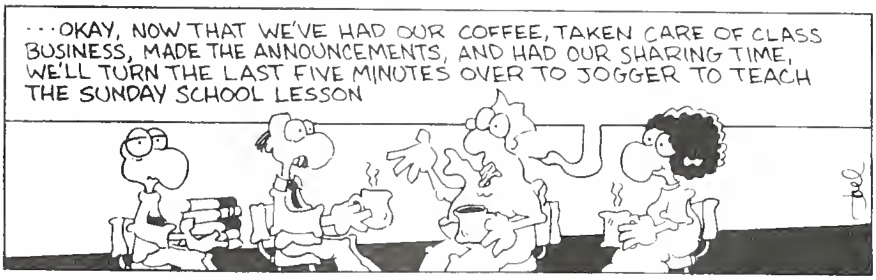
Jason Bauserman
Bartow, W.Va.

Volunteer Opportunities

VOLUNTEERS are needed for the **New Windsor Conference Center,** located at the lovely, historic Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, MD. The Center is located in a historic peaceful, rural treed setting with the theme of "A quiet place to get things done." It is also convenient to Gettysburg, Baltimore, and Washington, DC with opportunities for travel, cultural and recreational events. We need volunteer hostesses/hosts to help provide hospitality and conference services to a variety of guests in a cozy and homey atmosphere. Maturity and detail orientation needed along with outgoing personality and genuine interest in providing excellent customer service. Furnished apartment and meals provided during period of service. Small stipend also available. Join us for few weeks or longer, if you'd like. For more information, call or write Bonnie Grady, Conference Coordinator, Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776-0188; 1-800-766-1553 (toll free).

Send payment for reprinting "Pontius' Puddle" from Messenger *to Joel Kauffmann, 111 Carter Road, Goshen, IN, 46526. $25 for one time use. $10 for second strip in same issue. $10 for congregations.*

Pontius' Puddle


...OKAY, NOW THAT WE'VE HAD OUR COFFEE, TAKEN CARE OF CLASS BUSINESS, MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND HAD OUR SHARING TIME, WE'LL TURN THE LAST FIVE MINUTES OVER TO JOGGER TO TEACH THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

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Cincinnati Church of the Brethren fellowship meets for worship & support in n.e. area of Cincinnati. We welcome others to join us or bring needs to our attention. Contact us c/o Cincinnati Friends Meeting House, 8075 Keller Rd., Indian Hill, OH 45243. Tel. (513) 956-7733.

Come worship in the Valley of the Sun with Community Church of the Brethren at 111 N. Sunvalley Blvd., Mesa, AZ 86207. Mail to: 8343 E. Emelita Ave., Mesa, AZ 85208. Tel. (602) 357-9811.

Concord Church of the Brethren Fellowship is the only Brethren outpost in the Charlotte, N.C. metropolitan area. We provide a full program of Christian Education, Worship and Spiritual Growth opportunities. Come and join us! For more information contact us by writing: Concord Church of the Brethren Fellowship, 929-F Clear Springs Shopping Center, Concord, NC 28027, telephone (704)782-3641 or e-mail <marklara@gocarolinas.com>

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Coordinator of Centralized Services. The Association of Brethren Caregivers is looking for a full-time Coordinator of Centralized Services to assist the Executive Director with programming and services to the association and the Fellowship of Brethren Homes, a ministry with Brethren retirement communities. Ideal candidates will demonstrate the following qualifications: working knowledge of the mechanisms and processes which impact services to the aging; experience in retirement community management; understanding of Church of the Brethren heritage; bachelor's degree in a related field; proficiency in interpretation and consensus building; comfort providing leadership in an environment with diverse interests; excellent communication, organization and computer skills. Send letter of application, resume and three references to Steve Mason, Executive Director, ABC, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

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Oberammergau Passion Play year 2000. Bohre tours will be leading three tours to Europe and the passion play during the year 2000. (May, July an September) Prices will begin at $2099.00. For information write to: Wendell and Joan Bohrer, 8520 Roya Meadow Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46217 (317)882-5067 Bradley and Bonnie Bohrer, 283 Parkway Drive, Berea OH 44017 or Matthew and Noelle Bohrer, 1860 Josep Court, Elgin, IL (847)697-2746.

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Sunday Service	10:30 AM
Phoenix First Church of the Brethren	
3609 N. 27th Street	
Phoenix, AZ 85016	(602) 955-8537
Sunday Service	10:45 AM
Tucson Church of the Brethren	
2200 North Dodge Boulevard	
Tucson, AZ 85716	(520) 327-5106
Sunday Service	10:00 AM

Turning Points

New members

Altoona 28th St., Altoona, Pa.: Nathan Davis, Bobby Frye, Robin Porta, Jamie Porta
Beaver Creek, Tenn.: Roy Kelly, Michelle Adams, Jeremiah Googe
Beaverton, Mich.:Dan Shaffer
Bethel, Everett, Pa.: Michael Cottle, Eleanor Ross
Bridgewater, Va.: Jonathan Alley, Colin Ackerman, Chad Craun, Carrie Draper, Sharon Flaten, David May, David Metzler, Jeremy Monk, Sterling Ritchie, Jason Rummel
Chiques, Manheim, Pa.: Katelynn Balmer, April Gainer
Dayton, Va.: Anita Adjetey, Kristian Caricofe, Ches Crawford, Matthew Reish, Tiara Saufley, Jonathan Saufley
Douglas Park, Chicago, Ill.: Melody Mackowiak
Ephrata, Pa.: Jack Harley
Everett, Pa.: Amy Calhoun, Chad Schulze
Fairview, Unionville, Iowa: Sharon Brinegar, Melissa Neher, Sheila Selix
Florin, Mount Joy, Pa.: Marc Mack, Curtis Dehmey, Justin Brinkman, Paul Butterfoss
Germantown Brick, Rocky Mount, Va.: Brian Angle, Deanna Flora, Emily Flora, Jared Flora, Melia Flora, Charles Huffman, Bonnie Minnix, Christopher John (C.J.) Page
Greenville, Ohio: Layla Carter, Katie Bonduvant
Harmony, Myersville, Md.: Tammy McFarland
Harper Woods, Mich.: Philip Ladouceur, Karen Ladouceur
Harrisburg, Pa.: Marisel Olivencia, Guillermo Olivencia
Highland Avenue, Elgin, Ill.: Jonathan Keeney
Maple Spring, Holsopple, Pa.: John and Patsy Shaffer, Paul McClucas
Mechanic Grove, Quarryville, Pa.: Brent Landis, Dustin Hunter, Jamie Platt, Anthony Johnson, Ellis Kreider, Kyle Young, Natalie Osborne, Faith Howell, Amanda Lloyd, Erica Findley
Middle Creek, Lititz, Pa.: Jesslyn Oberholtzer
Mountville, Pa.: Art Thomas, Tom Bastian
Pleasant Dale, Decatur, Ind.: Chandler Harnish, Abbi Hirschy
Pleasant Hill, Spring Grove, Pa.: Daniel R. Bair, Eric A. Bievenour, Katie S. Churchfield, Kristina J. Gable, Wesley B. Hill, Melita J. Hilty, Brian S. Hunt, Joel A. Lehigh, Caleb N. Miller, Emily S. Miller, Erika L. Miller, Isaac P. Miller, Jeremy E. Miller, Tanya B. Miller, Dustin R. Nell, Ervin P. Newcomer, Joani L. Noecker, Danielle B. Schildt, Tiffany L. Schildt, Tina M. Stump, Tamara S. Stump, Daniel T. Walmer, Andrea M. Yohe, Nicole A. Yohe
Pyrmont, Delphi, Ind.: Christine Adams
Roann, Ind.: Norma Draper, Dennis Cripe, Judy Cripe, Michelle Cripe, David Hahn, Audrey Hahn, Brad Wilson, Susan Wilson, Andy Brower, Ryan Hahn, Megan Hahn, Kyle Musselman, Ryan Musselman, Lynisa Bruce
Ross, Mendon, Ohio: Deena Knepper, Paul Hamilton
Sugar Ridge, Custer, Mich.: Fred Smith, Lee Bates, Ardath V. Regan
Uniontown, Pa.: Jamie Balsley, Julia Hyjurick, Eric Kalivoda, Lauren Stein
West Goshen, Goshen, Ind.: Scott Galloway, Alyssa Bates

Wedding Anniversaries

Baile, Glen and Betty, Warrensburg, Mo., 50
Bailey, Doyle and Frances, Centerville, Iowa, 50
Bayer, Ogretta and Daniel, Roanoke, Va., 50
Beahm, Aliene and Robert, Nokesville, Va., 50
Burket, Herman and Mae, Martinsburg, Pa., 65
Carpenter, Sidney and Alice, Warrensburg, Mo., 60
Ebersole, Lynn and Jennie, La Verne, Calif., 65
Erbaugh, James and Phyllis, Dayton, Ohio, 50
Erisman, Ethmer and Kathryn, Warrensburg, Mo., 50
Evans, Tom and Rose, Wyomissing, Pa., 55
Flora, Kermit and Pauline, Bridgewater, Va., 60
Gillin, Thelma and Ralph, Johnstown, Pa., 50
Greiner, Lester and Naomi, Manheim, Pa., 60
Grove, Charles and June, Unionville, Iowa, 50
Jackson, Florence and Inez, Norcatur, Kan., 50
Jenkins, Dempsy and Mary Louise, Warrensburg, Mo., 55
King, Tom and Opal, Centerville, Iowa, 50
Lauver, Wilbur and Florence, Ottawa, Kan., 70
Lentz, Marie and Paul, Johnstown, Pa., 50
Mason, John and Blance, Moulton, Iowa, 50
Meekley, Donald and Goldie, Waynesboro, Pa., 50
Miller, Paul and Kathryn, Manheim, Pa., 50
Mosler, Marlin and Mae, Manheim, Pa., 55
Moyer, Glen and Mabel, Greenville, Ohio, 77
Patrick, Norman and Beryl, Hershey, Pa., 70
Sensening, Raymond and Theda, Ephrata, Pa., 50
Stein, Robert H. and Betty, Uniontown, Pa., 50

Licensed

Battle, Michael Glenn, April 4, Copper Hill, Va.
Bishop, Granville Lee, April 4, Pleasant Valley, Alum Ridge, Va.
Bloom, Geneva, Elkhart, Ind., May 23
Borne, Fredric, May 2, Pleasant Dale, Decatur, Ind.
Bowman, Ben S., April 4, Peters Creek, Roanoke, Va.
Cooper, Mary, 93, North Manchester, Ind., Oct. 19
Johnson, Kendall Mark, April 4, Green Hill, Salem, Va.
Naff, Jerry Wayne, April 4, Cedar Bluff, Boones Mill, Va.
Ober, Barbara, April 19, Live Oak, Calif.
Schrag, Rick, Nov. 15, McPherson, Kan.
Thompson, Johnny Lewis, Sept. 6, 1997, Henry Fork, Rocky Mount, Va.

Ordained

McKinnell, Leth Miriam Miller, April 4, New Covenant Fellowship, Chester, Va.

Pastoral Placements

Bitner, Robert, from Union City, Ohio, to Brookville, Ohio
Brumbaugh, Galen H., from Pleasant Valley, Meyers Cave, Va., to Roaring Spring, Pa.
Cannistraci, Kristen, from other denomination, to Pittsburgh, Pa.
Durr, Stephen, from Bethany, to Leamersville, Duncansville, Pa.
Fike, Matthew, to Pleasant Valley, Weyers Cave, Va.
Greiser, Terrence, from Pleasant View, Burkittsville, Md., to Ivy Farms, Newport News, Va.
Longanecker, Kevin, to Kent, Ohio
Sayre, John, to Grottoes, Va.
Sonafrank, Hal, from Middle River, New Hope, Va., to Leakes Chapel, Stanley, Va.
Truitt, David, to Woodbury, Pa.
Vaught, Terry, from Pittsburg, Delphi, Ind., to Mansfield, Ohio
Vaught, Sherry, from Beacon Hts, Fort Wayne, Ind., to Mansfield, Ohio

Deaths

Alcala, Janice, 55, Modesto, Calif., July 7
Babb, Beatrice H. "Bee," 80, Freeport, Ill., July 16
Bender, Ruth V., 88, Johnstown, Pa., Jan. 24
Bollinger, Rachel, 88, Neffsville, Pa., June 7
Boone, Sylvia Meek, 65, Roanoke, Va., March 25
Brinegar, Tommie, 50, Moulton, Iowa, Sept. 20
Brock, Frances E., Elkhart, Ind., July 10
Buhrt, Richard E., 61, Goshen, Ind., Feb. 2
Carter, Fred LeRoy, Sr., 90, Selma, Va., April 2
Clark, Maude M., 94, Elkhart, Ind., June 7
Cleland, Nannie Maxion, 101, Warrensburg, Mo., June 12
Clement, Vera, 82, Salem, Va., Jan. 21
Chrisman, Lee, 75, San Diego, Calif., June 5
Clark, Richard, 84, North Liberty, Ind., July 9
Conaway, Doris, 71, Detroit, Mich., May 24
Cripe, Sereata L., 88, Mishawaka, Ind., Jan. 9
Crumley, Shirley Spangler, 75, Knoxville, Tenn.
Davidson, Eldon Dale, 82, Virden, Ill., July 3
Dooley, Norita, 62, New Paris, Ind., June 13
Elder, Curvin, 84, Littlestown, Pa., July 16
Getz, Elvin, 89, Lancaster, Pa., June 27
Grove, Vivian, 77, Elkhart, Ind., Dec. 16
Harris, Woodrow, 82, Salem Va., March 17
Holdeman, Lavon B., 81, Goshen, Ind., Feb. 2
Jacobsen, Stanley, 85, San Diego, Calif., May 31
James, Rachel (Merle), 93, North Manchester, Ind., June 20
Jefferson, Tressie, 86, Danville, Va., June 22, 1997
Kaucher, Elva, 67, Ephrata, Pa., July 8
Keim, Rebecca, 104, Davidsville, Pa., April 27
Kennedy, Hazel M., 89, La Verne, Calif., July 14
Kepler, James P., 74, Kansas City, Kan., June 15
King, Norma Jean Boone, 67, Roanoke, Va., March 10
Lehman, Roy, 84, Mechanicsburg, Pa., May 6
Long, Esther, 90, Salem, Va., June 5
Long, Ralph, 87, Salem, Va., June 5
Lowe, Katharine Kline, 87, Roanoke, Va., June 14
Lowe, Teresa, 108, New Oxford, Pa., June 29
Lucas, Elmer, 67, Rocky Mount, Va., June 12
Manamay, Ruth E., 84, Ashland, Ohio, June 16
Manning, Retha Boone, 93, Roanoke, Va., April 23
Marshall, Judie, 97, Danville, Va., Sept. 18, 1997
Mays, Morley J., 86, Lancaster, Pa., July 5
Meccia, Lee, 89, Yuma, Ariz., March 10
Miller, Dorothy, 85, Goshen, Ind., June 18
Miller, Theresa, 84, Nokesville, Va., July 14
Moherman, Will T., 72, Ashland, Ohio, June 28
Mohler, Caroline, 100, Ephrata, Pa., April 17
Moorefield, Joseph, 78, Danville, Va., April 11, 1997
Mostoller, Scott Allen, 35, Hooversville, Pa., May 22
Murty, Beatrice F., 92, Johnstown, Pa., March 9
Nelson, Zora, 99, Pyrmont, Ind., March 8
Patrick, Betty L., 68, Lafayette, Ind., April 11
Ressler, Susie, 79, Lancaster, Pa.
Rhoades, Vernon C., Rocky Ford, Colo., April 28
Roach, Lillie Mae, 83, Centerville, Iowa, Oct. 1
Smith, Leta Wine, 92, Chicago, Ill., June 15
Studebaker, Florence, 102, La Verne, Calif., June 17
Svabek, Norma, 74, Chicago, Ill., Nov. 13
Terry, Helen, 63, Fayetteville, W.Va., July 12
Throne, Ferne, 89, Cleveland, Ohio, April 9, 1997
Trittle, Charles, 72, Akron, Ohio, April 17
Vorhis, Emory O., 91, Goshen, Ind., April 25
Weik, Leroy, 81, Palmyra, Pa., June 29
Williams, Edva Slusher, Floyd, Va., May 15
Winklebauer, Pat, 72, Beecher, Ill., March 2
Wood, Virginia E., 80, Ashland, Ohio, May 8
Wyant, Clayton F., 91, Wichita, Kan., July 13
Yarde, Edith, 89, Avilla, Ind., June 5
Yoder, Le Roy N., 68, Goshen, Ind., May 23
Young, Alice, 90, Ferndale, Md., June 13

Editorial

Casting out fear

I went to confront my homophobia-phobia. I don't fear homosexuals so much as the issue of homosexuality in the church. I'm afraid of the anger the issue elicits, and of the danger that it will divide the church, both the congregation and the denomination. I shrink from the confrontation that's sure to result whenever the suggestion is made that the Church of the Brethren should welcome gays and lesbians. "Nothing scares me like scared people," says William Sloane Coffin, and I agree. One Anabaptist suggested that the peace tradition, which ought to give us tools for dealing with controversy, keeps us silent instead. Some are silently hostile to homosexuals; others are silently supportive. President Clinton didn't invent the policy of "don't ask, don't tell" regarding homosexuality. Churches keep quiet too.

But it's time to break the silence, and to get over this fear of fear. To help me do so I went to the "Dancing in the Southwind" conference in Wichita, Kan. July 24-26. This fourth annual conference was billed as a gathering of the Supportive Congregations Network, sponsored by the Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (BMC) and the Church of the Brethren Womaen's Caucus. I went to find out what the issues are. What do these people want?

The "gay agenda" here was pretty low key. This was more like a revival meeting than a political rally. Much of the time was spent in worship, which revolved around the dual metaphors of dancing and wheat processing. The worship was aimed more at personal repentance and salvation than at societal change. We planted wheat to "grow into our true selves," then separated the wheat from the chaff to get rid of sin in our lives. When we prayed for tolerance, it was for us to be more tolerant of others, rather than for them to be more tolerant of us. Inclusivity was discussed as a practice of including and welcoming those who disagree with homosexuals and their supporters. "We don't have to like each other to get along," the speaker said.

I heard no talk here of gay rights, or of same-sex marriages, or even of ordination for homosexuals. That is not to say these issues aren't important or that the people here don't work on them. It is just that, at this conference, the issue was simply acceptance. Can the church open its doors wide enough to welcome gays and lesbians? Other, more difficult, issues can be decided after that one is decided. One speaker said the church must have a compassionate heart. "If someone is hungry, you feed them," he said. "If someone wants to fellowship with you, you give them your love."

Many at this conference are merely wanting to find their place in the church, which too often has become no the healer but the cause of pain. The first night we broke into small groups to talk about why we had come. Two Mennonite women in my group were both mothers of gay sons. They had come to support their sons and to find ways to bring their churches along. One mother shared the pain of watching her grown son have to leave the ministry after he had accepted his homosexuality. The other's congregation had been supportive of her son and other homosexuals, but then was "disciplined" by its Mennonite conference for doing so.

Another in our group was a lesbian schoolteacher in a small town in Canada who keeps her homosexuality a secret for fear of losing her job. Though she has a strong faith and longs for the guidance and support of her pastor and church family as she wrestles with being more open about her life, she feels she can't ask for help from her faith community. Not only is the church made up of the parents of her pupils, it recently passed a measure condemning homosexuality.

It seems not much to ask for churches to do in this instance what they do best otherwise—love and support those seeking love and support. When it is discussed at all, homosexuality can be treated more like a cold debate topic rather than a subject of human concern. Some hav grown weary of debating. In her speech to the BMC luncheon at Annual Conference, Karen S. Carter, Brethren activist from Daleville, Va., said the attempts by all sides "to convince, to convert, to coerce" are contrary to Jesus ministry because they "divert our limited physical and mental and spiritual resources from the larger task to which we have been called: To feed the hungry, clothe th naked, visit the sick and the imprisoned . . . ." Her solution is for the church to give homosexuals and their supporters at least as much latitude and respect as it gives racists, or those who refuse to accept women in ministry. The attitude must be one of accepting differences: "We differ. We differ with one another on a matte of interpretation of the scriptural meaning for our day."

It will be difficult for the church to move from silence to a more inclusive position. It was suggested that on thi issue we can expect help from the gay community itself. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the church is the wounded person. Excluded persons are the healers, treating the festering wounds of hypocrisy. The opening night speaker named the challenge ahead: "We are here to be the new church, changing patterns of fear to love."

—Fletcher Farra

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you are no longer strangers

Glenn Mitchell

Out of 75 years of mission partnership, a vital young church in Nigeria has come to hold a special place in the hearts of US Brethren. The assurance Paul gave to the church at Ephesus, "You are no longer strangers," is the message of the church in America for Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN), the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria.

Resources for the World Mission Offering on October 4 recount the courage of this vital, witnessing church. In a climate of repression, EYN announces God's justice and mercy. In a fractured society, EYN proclaims the unity Christ brings across tribes and languages. Amid conflicting interpretations of the gospel, EYN strives to be both faithful to biblical teaching and relevant to African culture.

Join in celebrating 75 years of solidarity with the Nigerian church. Assist EYN in training leaders for a new century. Express your heartfelt support with a generous gift to the World Mission Offering.

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Church of the Brethren General Board

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Messenger

A time to laugh

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Messenger

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On the cover: What are these people so happy about? They're attending the fourth National Older Adult Conference, sponsored by the Association of Brethren Caregivers, at beautiful Lake Junaluska, N.C. And they are being entertained by 74-year-old Merrilyn Belgum, who calls herself the Queen Mother of Comedy. The photo is by Nevin Dulabaum, manager of news services for the General Board. Nevin photographed the conference with a digital camera, which uses a computer chip instead of film. His photos also appeared on the denomination's Web site, www.brethren.org.

Features

10 The spirit of the National Older Adult Conference

14 Nigeria: No longer strangers

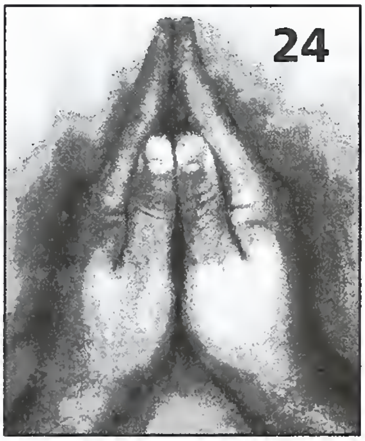
A tour group of 31 Church of the Brethren members, many of them former mission workers, traveled to Nigeria earlier this year to help celebrate the 75th anniversary of EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. In a special package of articles for the October World Mission emphasis on Nigeria, Charles Bieber chronicles the trip, and Donna Forbes Steiner recounts lasting impressions. Mervin Keeney describes a powerful moment at Mason Technical School, and Chalmer Faw recalls lessons he has learned in Nigeria.

21 When a sister church has trouble

It called for disaster response of a different kind when Manchester Church of the Brethren learned that a leader of its sister church in El Salvador had been assassinated. Both churches learned more about what sisters are for.

24 Successful Sunday school

When David S. Young made a study of the characteristics of several successful Sunday schools, he found they had 12 factors in common. See how many of these ingredients are in your church's Christian education program. And how many more can you add?



Marianne Sackett

Marla Bieber Abe

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From the Publisher

Anyone who gets involved in church finds out that meetings are ubiquitous. It seems that just about any task requires a meeting to get it accomplished.

Several years ago I discovered that my life had too many meetings when I overheard my two older children play "going to a meeting." Whatever happened to playing house?

But once in a while a meeting is actually inspiring. The best meeting I've experienced in a long time was the first gathering of the Hymnal Pocket Series Committee, which met in August (see page 8).

We began with worship. We cried together over the death the day before of a friend just beginning her ministry. We shared deeply about our families and ourselves. We read scripture and prayed and sang hymns. (In fact we ended the meeting by singing our way through an entire hymnal, and I felt privileged to have a job where I can be paid for singing for two hours.) In these ways we set the stage for worshipful work carried out within the context of community.

Our small committee had a long list of decisions that needed to be made over the two-day period. But those tasks were accomplished against a backdrop of ongoing conversation about the meaning of worship, of community, of life in the Church of the Brethren. We chewed on the perennial question of "contemporary" music versus traditional music. What distinguishes a "good" hymn from a "bad" hymn? How do people evaluate the theology in their hymns?

Underlying our work was the conviction that worship is at the center of our life as a church and that we cannot be truly faithful if we do not take our worship seriously. "Good worship should be our top priority," says Marva J. Dawn (*Reaching Out without Dumbing Down*), "since it is the only thing the Church does that no one else can do. Moreover, good worship is worth the effort—not only to praise God, but also to form the character of the believers and to nourish the Christian community."

When people complain about the quality of a worship service, perhaps it is because the service is not truly worshipful. If our worship services do not help people encounter God, then it matters little whether they are contemporary or traditional, crowded or half-empty.

What would the Church of the Brethren look like if all of us put as much energy into our worship services as we do our committee meetings? How can we better help people encounter God? How can we guide worshipers into a faith that is personal without being private? How can we make sure that every element of the worship experience proclaims the true gospel, not some sugary substitute?

Ponder these questions as you prepare your hearts for your next worship service. Take time, also, to send the Hymnal Pocket Series Committee your suggestions for hymns whose art and message connect the worshiping community with God.

Wendy McFadden

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Nebraska Brethren is 'Up with People'

Genelle Wine had wanted to be part of Up With People ever since she heard them give a concert back home in Nebraska. The fifth of six children in a Brethren family in the Enders, Neb., church, Wine was a sophomore at McPherson College when the world-traveling musical group gave a performance there last spring. She applied.

Out of 6,000 who applied, she became one of 750 accepted to join the musical group. Genelle was excited and went about campus singing the Up With People theme song.

Genelle reported to Up With People in Denver this past July. After six weeks she was placed in one of three casts. Two other casts had been deployed in January. All casts do some international traveling and Genelle was scheduled to leave for the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany on Oct. 4. Before leaving from Michigan for Europe, Genelle's cast sang at Hays, Kan., as well as her hometown of Imperial, Neb.

The Up With People program strives to promote cultural awareness and peace. Wine, who had never traveled outside the US before, said, "I'm looking forward to learning about a variety of cultures." She also anticipates being involved in Up With People's service projects—working on Habitat houses, youth hospices, and homes for the elderly.

"By staying with 80 to 90 host families and being in each town three or four days during the 10-month program, I'll experience family life in different cultures," said Wine. By the summer of 1999 Wine will definitely be experienced singing the Up With People theme song.

—Irene Shull Reynolds

Tragic accidents claim two church leaders

Janelle Pheasant-Pennington, a senior at Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind., died Aug. 4 from injuries sustained in a single-car auto accident. At the time of the accident, Pennington was en route to The Brethren's Home in Greenville, Ohio, where she was serving as a summer chaplain.

A graduate of Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa., Pennington was to begin as pastor of Spring Run Church of the Brethren, near McVeytown, Pa., in September. Funeral services were at Stone church, Huntingdon.

Harry L. Stover, 76, of Dayton, Va., died Aug. 16 in a two-vehicle crash in which the other driver was also killed. News reports said the other driver had apparently fallen asleep.

Stover was a member of Mount Bethel Church of the Brethren, Dayton, where he served on the church board. He had long been active in Gideons International, the organization known for distributing Bibles, and was en route to a Gideons prayer breakfast at the time of his death. Stover's daughter, Martha S. Barlow, of Dayton, Va., serves on the Church of the Brethren General Board.

Two churches mark historic milestones

Mount Pleasant Church of the Brethren, Bremen, Ind., celebrated its 150th anniversary July 26 with an event called "A Great Cloud of Brethren Witnesses." Participants came as their favorite Brethren historical person or as a representative of an area in which Brethren have offered mission and service. Attendees also participated in a love feast. Mount Pleasant, the mother church of Bremen, Camp Creek, and Walnut congregations, also held a special worship celebration on Aug. 9.

Poplar Grove Church of the Brethren, 4 miles southeast of Union City, Ohio, will celebrate the centennial of its present building Oct. 19-25. There will be preaching services nightly, Monday-Friday, a special Sunday worship service and dinner, followed by an afternoon service Oct. 25. The first church meeting house was built in 1878, followed by the present building in 1898. Pastor James Lucas asks friends of the church to join the celebration and bring photos and mementos.

Blue River *Church of the Brethren Youth Missions Team, from left: Adam Shively, Jessica Kreider, Mark Ray, Rachel Frank, and Jason Gipe.*

Indiana youth go to Ireland on a mission

Four youth and one adult from Blue River Church of the Brethren, Columbia City, Ind., went to Northern Ireland for three weeks in July to participate in a mission trip in conjunction with Youth for Christ's Project Serve.

In Northern Ireland they stayed in the homes of local Christian leaders. Later they went to Athy, in the Irish Republic, where they assisted a local congregation and youth ministry with an evangelistic outreach.

Happy 300th birthday to the Kurtz organ

It was 300 years ago that a German craftsman put the followinginscription on his latest masterpiece: " In the forenoon of September 23, 1698, I Johan Christoph Harttman, organ maker of Nurttingen, firmly closed this small wind chest. May God grant that many beautiful and spiritual psalms and songs be played and struck on this work to His name's honor."

Nothing more is known about the history of what today is known as the "Kurtz" organ until it came into the possession of Henry Kurtz, the 19th-century Brethren leader who is remembered as a publisher, editor, printer, Annual Meeting clerk, and minister.

Today the organ is in the basement of the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Ill., as part of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives collection. A short celebration of the organ's 300th anniversary was held there on Sept. 23.

Holocaust research presented in Israel

Scott Holland, pastor of the Monroeville, Pa. congregation, was at Haifa University in Israel during August to present a paper on the Holocaust. His presentation was based on his research of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's experience in New York City and how that influenced his resistance to European fascism and Hitler.

'Little Stories' now available in Japanese

Congratulations to Donna McKee Rhodes, pastor of nurture at Stone Church of the Brethren in Huntingdon, Pa. Her book, *Little Stories for Little Children*, has just been translated into Japanese. Previously this popular worship resource was translated into Chinese, Thai, and Portuguese.

—Eva Wampler

Oldest bicyclist for MS gets media attention

Dean Farringer, retired pastor and member of the Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren in Littleton, Colo., became a media celebrity in the Multiple Sclerosis 150 Bicycle Challenge. As the oldest rider, at age 78, in the 150-mile bike ride through the Rocky Mountains, he attracted the attention of Denver print and broadcast journalists. He participated in the fundraiser out of concern for the 300,000 people with MS, including his youngest daughter, Mary Wiens of Houston, Tex. In a poignant moment caught by a local television crew, Dean was greeted at the finish line by Mary, who had been flown in by her sisters as a surprise.

Farringer, who has been a pastor in Moscow, Idaho; Fredericksburg, Iowa; and Lima, Ohio; said his inspiration for biking through the mountains was Isaiah 40:4: "Every valley shall be lifted up and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain."
—Sarah Leatherman Young

Boulder Hill gets building "ready for the future"

More than 100 people came to a July 26 open house at Boulder Hill Neighborhood Church of the Brethren, Montgomery, Ill., to celebrate extensive building renovations. To accommodate wheelchairs, an automatic door opener was installed and bathroom facilities upgraded. To make room for a ramp to access the chancel area, the old baptistry was removed and the church purchased a portable baptistry that can be stored elsewhere. Air conditioning was installed in the sanctuary, where walls were painted, floors carpeted, upholstered chairs added, and sound and lighting systems enhanced. "We are ready for the future," said pastor Anna Lee Hisey Pierson, "with a building that can accommodate all people."

A painting party *at Boulder Hill, with Cathy Riemenschneider and Marlee DeRudder*

Anniversary gifts for *Cindy and Don Booz included a silver chafing dish.*

'Celebration of Booz' in McPherson, Kan.

Ten years of ministry to one congregation and 25 years of marriage—both are cause for celebration. Recognizing this, the McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren honored its pastor, Don Booz, and his wife, Cindy, with a "Celebration of Booz" (COB) Day. Following worship, Don and Cindy were called to the front of the church and treated to a year-by-year review of Don's 10 years as pastor. For each of the 10 years, the Boozes received a crisp $100 bill. This was followed by a catered dinner and anniversary cake. After a serenade by a strolling violinist, Don and Cindy opened anniversary gifts, and many cards and letters. In his words of thanks to the congregation, Don said, "If more churches did this, there would not be a shortage of pastors in the Church of the Brethren."

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," Messenger, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

News

Clinton urged to 'Beat the Heat' of global warming

Judy Mills Reimer, executive director of the Church of the Brethren General Board, has joined other heads of communions in urging President Clinton to sign the Kyoto Protocol to the Climate Convention.

The 229th Unit of Brethren Volunteer Service *was based at Northern Colorado Church of the Brethren for its orientation July 19 to Aug. 7, and the unit participated in National Youth Conference at Fort Collins, Colo. First row, from left: Lars Neumeister, Amy Garrison, Tina Rieman (staff), Helice Agria, Stephanie Osborne, Rosita Huston, Debbie Fleming, Ginger Gates, Elizabeth Hernon. Second row: Stevan Curcija, Darryl Rock, Sean Dell, Andreas Peschke, Sandy Rock, Paul Tomcho, Matt St. Clair. Third row: Anne May, Frank Klein, Doug Pierce, Matt Stauffer (staff), Fabian Sattler, Matt Hershey, Todd Reish (staff), Waltraut Meiners, Steve Wilson, Greg Frantz, Gabe Garrison.*

The Kyoto treaty calls for industrial nations to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, with the United States cutting 1990 levels by seven percent over the next 10 to 15 years. Last year, US carbon dioxide emissions were about 10 percent higher than 1990, said David Radcliff, director of the General Board's Brethren Witness office.

"With five tons of carbon dioxide emissions per person per year in the United States, our nation has the moral responsibility to take the lead in curtailing activities that threaten the creation," Radcliff said. "Many scientists predict that the cycles of floods, fires, and other natural disasters that we've seen of late will become standard fare in the future, unless we can reverse the process of global warming."

While noting their encouragement at the Clinton Administration's public comments concerning climate change, the letter signers stated, "Leadership from the United States is crucial for global efforts on climate change to be successful. Simply put, we believe that the earth is the Lord's and that we as God's stewards must care for its well-being."

A Beat the Heat packet to assist congregations in taking steps to combat global warming is available from the Brethren Witness office. Contact Radcliff at dradcliff_gb@brethren.org or 800-323-8039 for more information.

'Servant church' is theme for 1999 Annual Conference

"Let the Servant Church Arise!" based on Luke 10:1-11, has been chosen as the theme for the 213th Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, which will be June 29-July 4, 1999, in Milwaukee.

This theme was selected in August during a meeting of the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee at the Church of the Brethren General Offices, Elgin, Ill. Subthemes for the six worship services "will highlight awakening to leadership, spiritual centeredness, servant community, reconciliation, evangelism, and empowerment/mission," said Duane Steiner, Annual Conference executive director.

Specific scriptures, preachers, and worship leaders for each worship service are still being finalized. Brethren artists are being sought to design the Annual Conference logo. Entries are due by Nov. 5.

For details, contact the Annual Conference office at annualconf@aol.com or at 800-323-8039.

Brethren take on medical mission work with Clinic Box

Districts surrounding New Windsor, Md., are being invited to kick off a pilot medical mission project this fall. This Church of the Brethren Clinic Box program will help provide medicines and medical supplies to clinics for the poor in the Dominican Republic.

Brethren congregations are being asked to gather specific over-the-counter medical products and collect funds to make up part of a Clinic Box. The remainder of the products will be added by Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc., with donations from American pharmaceutical companies. Success in the pilot program will create opportunities to expand the program into other interested districts, and perhaps into other countries equally in need of basic, reliable healthcare and quality medical products.

Church aids refugees and ships tons of supplies

Two Bosnian refugee families were resettled in August by the Church of the Brethren Emergency Response/Service Ministries.

One family, with five members, will locate in the Annapolis, Md., area. The other, with three members, will be resettled in Thurmont, Md. Through the first seven months of this year, ER/SM reports it has resettled 196 refugees from 14 countries.

ER/SM also recently sent a 20-foot container of medical supplies and equipment to Nairobi, Kenya, on behalf of the Medical Benevolence Foundation. Five 40-foot containers that included 400 rolls of plastic sheeting, 16,000 five-gallon water containers, 7,200 blankets, and 320 tents were recently shipped to Guam for the US Office of Disaster Assistance. These items will be stored in Guam for use in future disasters.

ER/SM also sent a 20-foot container of medical supplies to North Korea.

It has shipped out 2,015,000 pounds of blankets; quilts; layettes; and health, cleanup, and school kits, at a value of more than $7.5 million. These shipments were on behalf of the Church of the Brethren and Church World Service, Lutheran World Relief, and United Methodist Committee on Relief.

ER/SM has also shipped over 980,000 pounds of medical supplies, valued at nearly $6 million, for agencies such as the Church of the Brethren and Interchurch Medical Assistance.

ABC and Brethren Homes take next steps on collaboration

The first of several programs designed by the Fellowship of Brethren Homes to help Brethren retirement communities develop a collaborative approach to common concerns has been announced by the Association of Brethren Caregivers, which manages the Fellowship as one of its ministry groups.

The first initiative, the forming of a new core group of collaboration advisers, will be followed by the hiring of a new staff position, a collaboration consultant, and planning for a new interactive communication forum.

These initiatives are a result of recommendations from participants of the Second Forum on Collaboration, a conference sponsored by the Fellowship of Brethren Homes for administrators of retirement communities and denominational leaders, which was held May 3-5 at the New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center.

The new Collaboration Core Group, which will work to formalize a structure for focusing on collaborative possibilities, met Aug. 29-30 at Lake Junaluska, N.C.

Future initiatives will include filling a new ABC staff position to provide additional staff support for the Fellowship and its programs; retaining Michael Winer, president of Synoptics Inc. of St. Paul, Minn., as a consultant on collaboration efforts; and establishing an online forum on ABC's Web site for members to discuss issues and pose questions.

Emergency food, seeds, tools headed for southern Sudan

With over 2 million people at risk of starvation in southern Sudan due to war and drought, the Church of the Brethren has responded with a $75,000 emergency appeal.

This Global Food Crisis Fund effort will provide food relief, seeds, tools, and blankets to the people of the Blue Nile and Bahr el Ghazal regions, where the suffering is most intense.

This initiative is in addition to Sudan: Partnership for Peace, a three-year, $238,000 Church of the Brethren effort to provide development aid, food for children, and peace training for the people of southern Sudan.

A postcard was sent to every congregation in early September outlining the emergency appeal and inviting responses by Thanksgiving. Gifts can be designated for Sudan Famine and sent to the Global Food Crisis Fund, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. Contact the Brethren Witness office for more information or for additional interpretive materials.

•A $10,000 grant from the Church

of the Brethren Global Food Crisis Fund was made in July for refugees in Chiapas, Mexico. Civil conflict in areas populated by indigenous communities has temporarily left citizens unable to plant or tend crops. This grant will help provide corn and beans for displaced people, feeding about 500 people in two displacement camps for the next three months, until harvest season.

•A grant of $36,000 from the Church of the Brethren Emergency Disaster Fund was made in late July to cover the work of Brethren Volunteer Service workers in the former Yugoslavia. There currently are six BVSers in the region and openings in at least four additional projects. The mission of these projects is to assist local groups in the pursuit of peace and reconciliation.

Group seeks suggestions for new Hymnal Pocket Series

First steps have been taken by Brethren Press to produce a Hymnal Pocket Series by the summer of 2000.

The project resurrects an idea conceived by the hymnal publishers — that of a series of booklets that fit into the pocket in the back of *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. A first in the series, *Favorite Gospel Songs and Hymns*, was published in 1992, but the series was never continued.

Brethren Press plans to produce five titles. The planning committee of Nancy Faus, Lani Wright, Jonathan Shively, and Wendy McFadden held a first meeting in August. An advisory group of some 40 people is being established to provide broad-based input to the selection of the hymns.

The committee is inviting all members of the denomination to submit suggestions for hymns and songs, as well as topics for the booklets. Suggestions should be sent by Nov. 30 to committee chair Nancy Faus, 345 S. 48th St., Richmond, IN 47374.

The suggestions should include a copy of the hymn and complete supporting information—composer, text writer, source, and copyright information. Also include the name, address, and phone number of the person making the suggestion.

The committee seeks hymns and songs that are of high quality, are singable by congregations, embody Brethren values, are inclusive, and enhance the worshiping community.

Hymnal: A Worship Book was co-published by Brethren Press, Faith & Life Press, and Mennonite Publishing House. The publishers are currently preparing for a sixth printing of the hymnal.

Miller Davis retires; other staff changes announced

Miller Davis, manager of Emergency Response/Service Ministries for the Church of the Brethren General Board, has announced his retirement effective Dec. 31.

Throughout his tenure Davis has worked at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md. After a two-year stint as a New Windsor-based Brethren Volunteer Service worker, Davis joined the General Board staff in 1971 as director of General Services in New Windsor. In 1977 he became director of Center Operations, duties he held until July 1997 when he became manager of Emergency Response/Service Ministries.

Among his many ecumenical activities, Davis represents the Church of the Brethren on the board of Heifer Project International.

In August, Bonnie Grady became conference coordinator for the New Windsor (Md.) Conference Center. Grady is a graduate of Western Maryland College and has worked at Maryland Public Television.

Joe Detrick, pastor of Codorus Church of the Brethren, Loganville, Pa., began Oct. 1 as executive of Southern Pennsylvania District. Detrick previously pastored Logansport (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, and served on the General Board staff as orientation director of Brethren Volunteer Service.

Dennis Kingery has accepted the position of controller/assistant treasurer for the General Board. He recently completed a two-year assignment for the General Board at Hillcrest School in Jos, Nigeria, where he taught business and accounting.

Kingery received his B.S. degree in accounting and business finance from McPherson (Kan.) College. He has served on his local church board and as a volunteer for other agencies.

Harvey Leddy of Dayton, Va., and Miriam Copp of Richland, Pa., have begun working as full-time educators in Nigeria on behalf of the Church of the Brethren General Board.

In his salaried staff position, Leddy is teaching at Hillcrest School in Jos. Leddy and his wife and their infant daughter arrived in Nigeria in August. Leddy is a 1998 music education graduate of Bridgewater (Va.) College, and a member of Bridgewater Church of the Brethren.

Copp traveled to Nigeria in July to become the Church of the Brethren's first teacher at the new Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) Comprehensive Secondary School, adjacent to Kulp Bible College near EYN headquarters and close to Mubi.

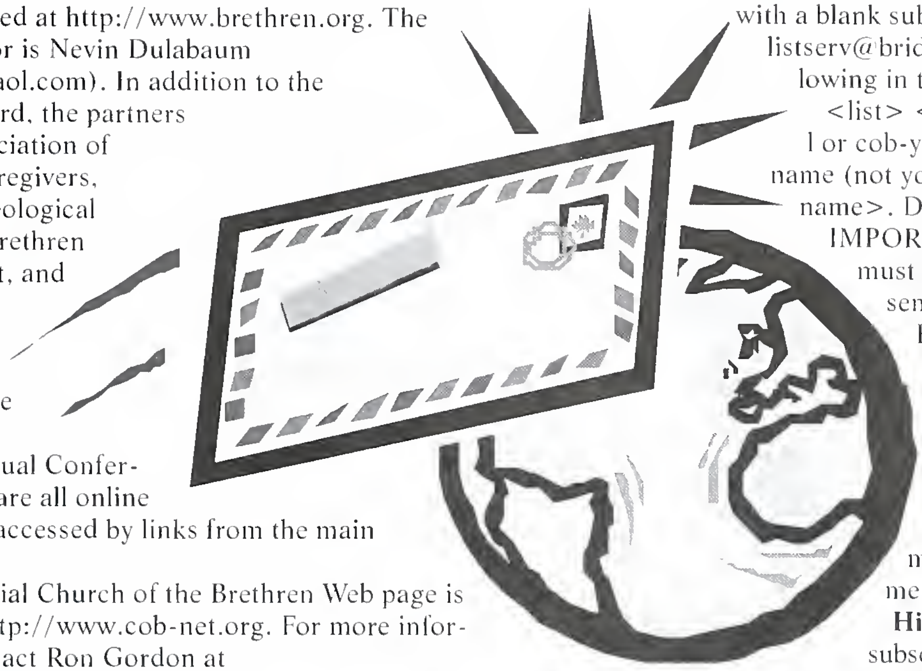
Copp, who took this assignment as a Brethren Volunteer Service worker, is a 1997 graduate of Hanover College. She is a member of Little Swatara Church of the Brethren, Bethel, Pa.

Resources and Opportunities

Online services connect Brethren

Here is a guide to staying connected with the Church of the Brethren and its members on the Internet.

Web page. The official Church of the Brethren Web page is located at http://www.brethren.org. The administrator is Nevin Dulabaum (cobnews@aol.com). In addition to the General Board, the partners are the Association of Brethren Caregivers, Bethany Theological Seminary, Brethren Benefit Trust, and Brethren Employees Credit Union. These agencies, plus the Annual Conference office, are all online and may be accessed by links from the main page.



An unofficial Church of the Brethren Web page is located at http://www.cob-net.org. For more information, contact Ron Gordon at rongordon@cob_net.org.

Staff e-mail addresses. Most employees of the Annual Conference office (AC), Association of Brethren Caregivers (ABC), Brethren Benefit Trust (BBT), and General Board (GB) have brethren.org e-mail addresses. A typical address uses the employee's first initial and complete last name, followed by an underscore and the abbreviation of the organization (noted above), followed by @brethren.org. General Board staff e-mail addresses are listed in the Church of the Brethren Yearbook. BBT addresses are listed at www.brethren.org/bbt/staff.htm.

On Earth Peace Assembly can be reached at oepa@oepa.org. OEPA's Ministry of Reconciliation is at mor@oepa.org. OEPA's Web page is at http://www.oepa.org.

Addresses at Bethany Theological Seminary use up to five letters of a person's last name and the first two characters of the first name, followed by @earlham.edu. Bethany's general e-mail address is bethanysem@aol.com.

E-mail directory. A directory of more than 800 Brethren Internet addresses is available at http://members.aol.com/jeminer/internet.txt. Those who would like a copy but are unable to access it, may send a request to cob_list@bigfoot.com.

Listservers. Two services, called listservers, have been created by church member Mike Willoughby. They are cob-l for general Brethren discussion and cob-yya for youth and young adult discussion. Both are now hosted by Bridgewater College. To join, send e-mail with a blank subject to listserv@bridgewater.edu and type the following in the body of the note: subscribe <list> <your name>. Substitute cob-l or cob-yya for <list>, and your full name (not your e-mail address) for <your name>. Do not type the <> characters. IMPORTANT NOTE: The subject line must be left blank in all commands sent to listserv@bridgewater.edu. However, if your e-mail program requires a subject line, enter the single character X. For full instructions, send e-mail with a blank subject to listserv@bridgewater.edu and type the following command in the body of the message: help.

History and genealogy. To subscribe to a Brethren history and genealogy listserver, send e-mail to brethren-request@rootsweb.com and place the following in the body of the message: subscribe. Send messages to brethren@rootsweb.com. For more information, contact Joe Bosserman at joe.boss@erinet.com. The home page for the Fellowship of Brethren Genealogists is http://www.cob-net.org/fobg/.

The Brethren colleges web page, which includes links to the colleges associated with the Church of the Brethren, may be found at http://www.brethren.org/genbd/relcol.htm.

Women's sermons requested

Church of the Brethren women are invited to submit up to three sermons to the Sermons of Women Project, an effort to publish a collection of sermons by Brethren women. Mail submissions by Nov. 30 to Sermons of Women, Bethany Theological Seminary, 615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374. Include name, address, phone number, and e-mail address; scripture and version of the Bible used; season of the church year or ritual for which the sermon was written; bibliographic citations for any quotes, illustrations, or references to other published writings; the location, date, and occasion or situation for which the sermon was preached.

For everything there is a season

For Everything There Is A Season
A TIME FOR...
Planting
Reaping
Listening
Speaking
Weeping
Laughing
Gathering
Leaving

Walter J. Burghardt *of Washington, D.C., led morning Bible study: "The practice of Biblical justice was an exercise of love."*

The spirit of NOAC IV

Story by Fletcher Farrar
NOAC photos by Nevin Dulabaum

Ventriloquist Steve Engle *and his buzzard "Buzz" delighted NOACers with his mixed-up knowledge of the Bible.*

After four days at the National Older Adult Conference you can feel what it means to say yes to years. There is a spirit here that autumn of life is a fine season, not without storms and cold days, but generally sunny, crisp, and colorful. t's no longer what you own that's mportant, but who you are.

"As we grow older, we have less to prove to others," said one speaker, "and more to learn about ourselves."

"I am no longer what I do," said another speaker. "I am who I am."

The flowered shores of Lake unaluska, watched over by North Carolina's Smoky Mountains, attracted 1,010 Brethren to this ourth biennial NOAC. The event, sponsored by the Association of Brethren Caregivers, has grown each ime, beginning with 621 registered or the first one in 1992. Many of hose who came this year were eturning for the second, third, or ourth time. A reunion with friends n a beautiful setting, a leisurely pace, a program of thoughtful speakers and entertainment, and spirit-filled worship. What more could seniors want? "It's just like Annual Conference without the voting," said one.

There was laughter all around. Video announcements, by David Sollenberger, Larry Glick, and Chris Brown, chronicled the exploits of a large talking bottle named Bob. One night by 74-year-old standup comic Merrilyn Belgum, who calls herself he National Older American Act, had many wisecracks. She joked about marriage: "My husband used to be romantic before we got married." And adult children who come back to live at home: "I told my son. 'I'm downsizing. I'm afraid I'm going to have to let you go. This is the end of welfare as you know it." And what's going on in Washington: "I'm peeved. I checked and there was not one White House intern over the age of 74."

When "paper plate aerobics" *were led by Gayle Appel Doll . . .*

. . . an enthusiastic crowd *found the plates could be used for something more healthful than hot dogs.*

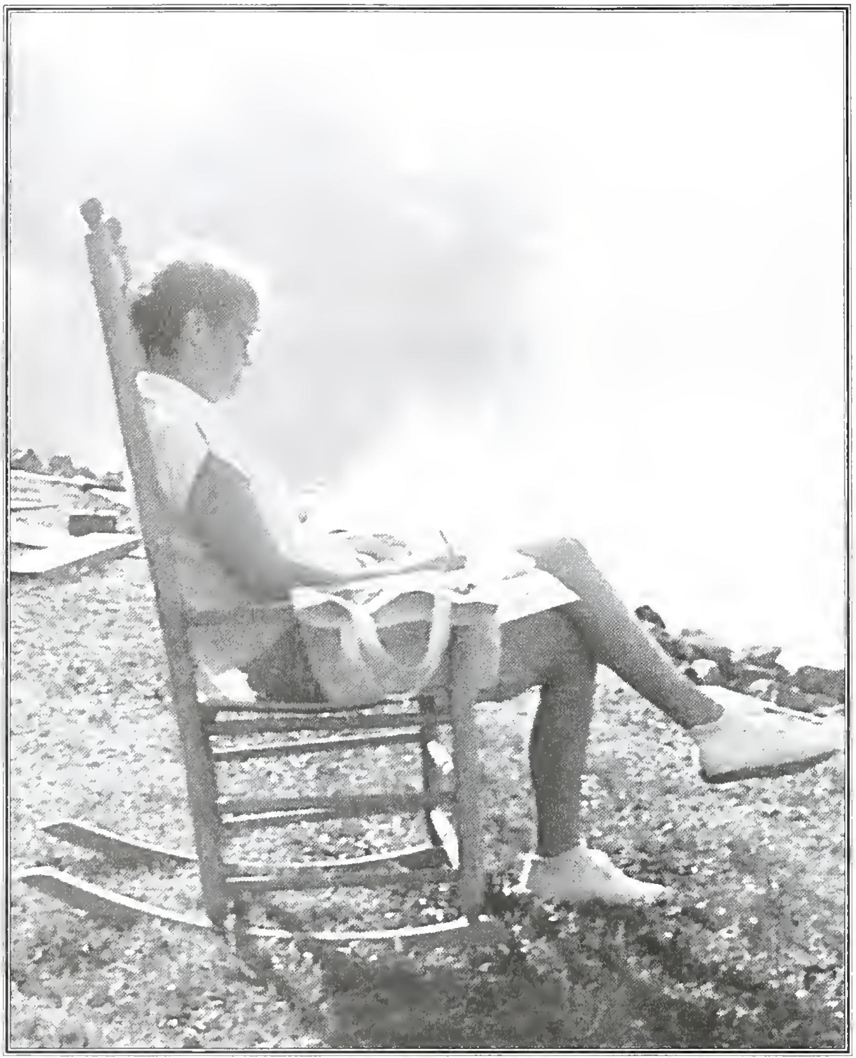
When Belgum turned serious, it was about being funny."We must breathe in the humor of our life situation," she said. "It shelters us from the wall of darkness. Humor is a prayer because it helps us see ourselves as human beings. When I'm laughing I feel close to God."

There were other serious issues. Andrew Anchenbaum, a University of Michigan professor who specializes in issues of aging, reminded those attending NOAC that the nation has left unanswered many serious public policy questions involving aging, notably health care and Social Security. "The advocacy situation is critical," he said. "This group deserves a place at the table when these issues are decided."

Father Walter J. Burghardt, a Jesuit theologian from Washington, D.C., began each morning with his Bible study lectures, which were eloquent reflections on the conference theme in Ecclesiastes 3, "For everything there is a season. . . ."

He talked about the need for Christians to "love the stranger" as

As we grow older, we have less to prove t



Early morning *quiet by the lake provided spiritual refreshment for Paulette Reichenbach of Freeport, Mich.*

Jesus loved the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. "The miracle of Jacob's well continues through you and me. Today, if you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts. Go out and spread Christ's love to the stranger, so that ultimately there will be no strangers."

This was, of course, a group that has been spreading Christ's love in many ways for many years. It was impressive to meet at the meal table one day a former general secretary and then a retired seminary professor the next. One meal partner had served 15 years on the General Board staff, and another as missionary to India. There was much to learn from a retired district executive, a former moderator, a chaplain, a retired college professor.

Though many here had called a halt to their formal employment and busy careers, they were actively serving God in other ways, often as volunteers. "We have an obligation to stay active," one speaker exhorted. "We can't afford to be sponges."

And while NOACers were happy to share the wisdom gained from their experience, they were careful not to glorify the past. I heard one man in his 90s admonish a friend who had started going on about "the good old days": "We mustn't overplay our history," he said, "or we'll get too negative about the future."

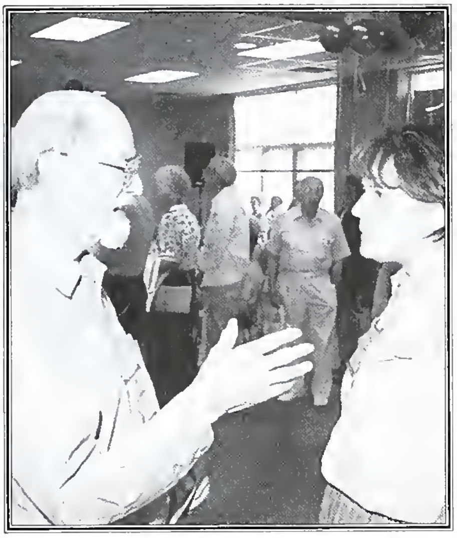
I heard no pessimistic conversations about the Church of the Brethren, but then I heard few talking about denominational business at all. Most talk centered instead on local congregations, things like the search for a new pastor, or the welcome new crop of young families to carry on the work. I began to wonder if there is a lack of interest in denominational affairs, so I dropped by the late-night session about the future of the Church of the Brethren. The large room was packed with perhaps 300 obviously interested seniors.

The program, titled "Looking Ahead and Moving On," was a panel comprising leaders of the Annual Conference, General Board, Association of Brethren Caregivers, On Earth Peace Assembly, Bethany Seminary, and Brethren Benefit Trust. They discussed the denomination's emerging organizational structure and fielded questions. Though the church leaders were cautious in their answers to some questions and said they didn't know the answers to others, many in the room came away saying they were reassured that the denomination is in capable hands.

It was this perspective of letting go while staying involved, of caring about issues while caring about people more, that characterized the older adults at Lake Junaluska.

At the closing worship service, several were asked to share their reflections. Ray Sollenberger of Everett, Pa., said he was inspired and challenged by the conference to be more vocal about his love for God. "I am reminded of a line in *Fiddler on*

thers, and more to learn about ourselves.



Raymond Peters, *former general secretary of the General Board, explains a point to Loyce Borgmann, coordinator of the General Board's Washington Office, during the inaugural ABC Resource Fair. Peters, 92, of Sebring, Fla., was one of several attendees over 90 years old.*

"Looking Ahead and Moving On" *was the billing for this panel of church leaders, who fielded questions from a large late-night crowd with keen interest in the future of the Church of the Brethren.*

the Roof, when Tevye asked his wife Golda, 'Do you love me?'

"'Do I what? For 25 years I've milked your cow, washed your clothes, cooked your meals. . . .'"

"The point is," said Sollenberger, "we can reflect our experience here by our living. But I hope we will not miss the added joy that can be ours by sharing our week with others back home."

Alice Golden, of Girard, Ill., said she felt lucky. "I feel lucky to have walked the Lake Junaluska path, and to have witnessed the wonderful hills, the dark tree silhouettes, and the rising mists against the pinks of the morning. And I feel lucky to have experienced the community of the week with you all."

Earle Fike, Jr., of Bridgewater, Va., said, "No business was conducted, and that was wonderful. I remember the sounds of frogs and crickets, and the soft murmur of conversations that were unfinished, and that was peaceful."

He concluded, "It rarely gets any better than this."

Brethrening $$$

Church treasurers, here's an idea

Upon learning of plans for the official closing of the South Whitley (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, Vernon H. Stinebaugh of York, Pa., who had pastored the South Whitley congregation for a total of 23 years in two different terms of service, contributed several memories, including this:

The church had been involved in the General Board project called the "Micah Mission." At one of the church board meetings the treasurer, Donna Patrick, had just given her report and asked if there were any questions. When someone on the board asked if all the bills had been paid to date, Donna replied, "All exept Micah Mission." The pastor quickly quipped, "I didn't know the treasurer got a commission."

MESSENGER *would like to publish other short, colorful, humorous or poignant stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submission to* MESSENGER, *1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at ffarrar_gb@brethren.org.*

The Nigeria Jubilee tour

Celebrating 75 years of successful partnership in ministry

Thirty-one Brethren *from the US, including many former mission workers, traveled to Nigeria for the EYN anniversary celebration in March.*

BY CHARLES BIEBER

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God. . . ."

It was this verse from Ephesians 2:19 which Stover Kulp and Albert Helser used in the first Christian worship service in Garkida, March 17, 1923. It is also the verse inscribed in English and Hausa on a monument under the tamarind tree where that first service took place. Out of that beginning, the first four converts would be baptized four years later.

In front of that same tamarind tree and monument, a tour group of 31 persons from the United States joined the Ekklesiyar Yanu'wa a Nigeria (EYN—Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) on March 17, 1998, for a six-hour service to celebrate their Diamond Jubilee. The celebration was marked by praise of God for this "thing of wonder," by gratitude to the mission workers whom the Church of the Brethren had shared across the years, by a pervasive sense of satisfaction for all that God has done through that church, and by excited anticipation of all the church is yet to be.

It was also marked by the warm welcome extended to the tour group. It was poignantly clear that Nigerian brothers and sisters felt just as much joy at the presence of these guests as the guests felt to be there, not simply because there were reunions with old friends, but also because these guests loved people and church enough to want to be there.

The tour had been a dream of Monroe Good and me, missionaries to Nigeria in the distant past, with Good as the prime mover and me the support. Twenty-three of the group had been missionaries or were the

No longer strangers

About the articles: October is the month congregations will be highlighting the World Mission Offering, which supports the global mission partnerships of the Church of the Brethren. The focus of this year's offering is the ministry of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN), the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, which this year celebrated 75 years of partnership with the Church of the Brethren. As part of that focus, MESSENGER presents a group of four articles on the work for Christ in Nigeria: "No longer strangers."

children of missionaries, one was a former workcamper, two had previously visited Nigeria to congratulate and encourage the women of the church, and five were first-time visitors. Although all were warmly received, the warmest greetings came to Mary Dadisman, nurse, teacher, administrator, deeply loved and fondly remembered by the many whose lives she had touched [see sidebar page 16].

EYN CHURCH
(CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN)

Marla Bieber Abe

The present *church at Abuja.*

The journey before Jubilee

Already the guests had spent 12 days in the country, visiting local churches, observing Nigerian culture, meeting government officials, experiencing the richest imaginable welcome, enjoying seven overnight visits in Nigerian homes, and learning to understand and appreciate EYN.

They had visited the ugliest church any of them could remember, a building with walls of reclaimed roofing metal, unpainted, undecorated, unidentified. Inside, they found the church comfortable and the 700 people enthusiastic. They learned that the original church there in Kano had been twice burned by Muslims and once bulldozed by the government, possibly as an eyesore. Rebuilt, it can hold 1,500 worshippers on a Sunday, has planted three other new congregations in the area, and looks forward to a new location and a new building. Ugly? Not in the eyes of God.

The tour group had also visited the Suleja church, on the outskirts of the nation's capital, Abuja, and enjoyed a "launching," a Nigeria-style fund drive to complete and equip the building. They had worshiped in the Abuja church, set in the area of the Federal Capital Territory reserved for religious groups. The area is filled with buildings for worship, so close together as to be almost inaccessible, and currently with no street arrangement. The Abuja brothers and sisters showed the new site they have obtained, in a desirable location, where they have begun a building that will eventually cost nearly $2 million.

From Abuja the group had traveled to Jos, where the Brethren had established Hillcrest School, originally for missionary children, but now with a wide-ranging student body. Arriving at the Jos church, the guests had been engulfed by a welcoming crowd with smiling faces, singing voices, clasping hands, and hugging arms. During their Jos visit, they learned that the district, new in the last 10 years, has more than 5,000 members and a dozen preaching points.

The tour also included a visit to the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, which the Church of the Brethren Mission and seven other churches and missions had established in 1959.

Then had come a visit to Maiduguri, capital of Borno Province and site of the first city church of EYN. Established in the early 1980s as the result of the dream of a dozen men whose work was in that city, the Maiduguri church is the largest Brethren church in the world, has regular Sunday attendance of about 4,000, and has established 10 other congregations in the area. The district has more than 10,000 members. Following the Maiduguri example, city churches have also been planted in Yola, Kano, Kaduna, Abuja, Jos, Sokoto, Zaria, Lagos, Port Harcourt, and others, covering the entire country.

Next was a visit to the Creative Arts College of the University of Maiduguri, where EYN member Nggida Gadzama, who had just completed a five-year term as vice chancellor, brought gifts of small clay pots marked "EYN 75."

From there the tour group had motored to EYN headquarters and Kulp Bible College. They had traveled through territory earlier served by the Basel Mission (of Switzerland and Germany), since 1963 a full partner with the Church of the Brethren and the Brethren Church. At headquarters they had learned of the continuation of programs originally begun by the Church of the Brethren Mission: the rural health program known as Lafiya, well digging, rural development, and Kulp Bible School (now Kulp Bible College).

They had also heard of programs new or expanded: Theological Education by Extension, a kind of roving college; the Mason Technical School; a vigorous literacy program; the Comprehensive Secondary School; evangelism among the Fulani people and in Mulgwe; and five district Bible schools. On the second weekend, visits were made to churches at Lassa, Yola, and Wandali.

Celebration day

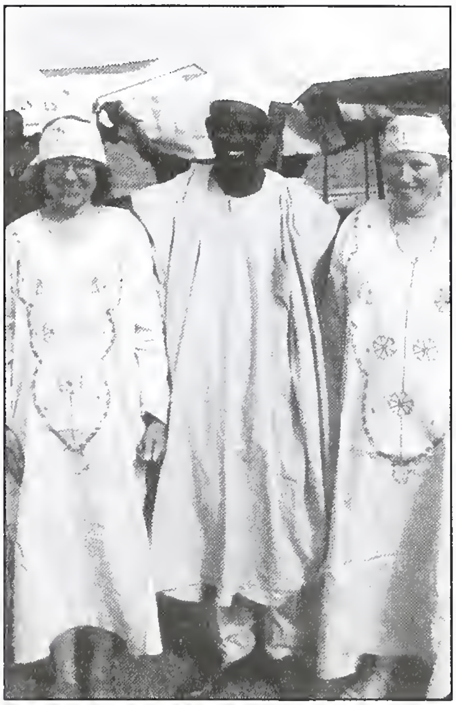
On to Garkida, where Celebration Day dawned warm and sunny. Arrivals at the seats set up near the tamarind tree found the crowd—which would exceed 5,000—already gathering. The program was conducted in both English and Hausa, and was easy to follow.

Dignitaries— in particular traditional rulers, government officials, and military administrators, about 20 of them—arrived in their chauffeur-driven autos. Ordained ministers of EYN, in pale blue robes and carrying briefcases that had just been presented to them, followed EYN president Bitrus Kwaghui Tizhe and vice president Karagama Apagu Gadzama in an impressive procession. The special dignitaries were introduced and a welcome extended to the tour group.

The Zamuntar Mattan Ekklesiya

(Association of Women of the Church) from Garkida and from the whole of EYN, sang in their stirring, rhythmic fashion. Their presence was a reminder that almost half of the EYN members are women, who are a powerful evangelistic force. Other musical groups sang, notably a group of young men and women and the EYN national choir. The Boys Brigade, Girls Life Brigade, technical school students, and Comprehensive Secondary School Students, marched and sang. Speakers reviewed the history of EYN and noted the church's broad current influence, as well as pointing into the future. A new book, *The Progressive History of the Ekklesiyar Yann'wa A Nigeria*, by five EYN authors, was officially "launched." Finally, dances from their tribal traditions were performed by groups from several nearby villages.

Official greetings to the assembly were brought by Wilhelm Scheydt of Basel Mission. I read the official letter of greeting from Church of the Brethren Annual Conference moderator Elaine Sollenberger, interim executive director Joseph Mason, and director of Global Mission Partnerships Mervin Keeney. Personal gifts to each of the tour group were presented by EYN and by the traditional ruler, the head of the Garkida District. Out of appreciation for founder Stover Kulp and his wife, Christine, the assemblage honored their daughter, Naomi Kulp Keeney, who had been born at Lassa, receiving her greetings and presenting her with a decorated cake.



Friends reunited: *Bonnie Bieber Corcoran, left, and Marla Bieber Abe with Paul Gadzama, whom the Biebers had known during their growing-up years in Nigeria.*

In his address reviewing the years from 1923 to date, Musa Mambula also pointed to the future. "The 1997 church statistics," he reported, "have revealed to us that from 1973 until now, ordained ministers have risen from 51 to 230, and with others approved, soon to be 252. The districts have risen from 6 to 36, communicant members from 18,000 to 140,000, while the average worshipers on Sundays has risen from 40,000 to 240,000 with about 1,070 preaching points from the earlier 430."

He added: "The EYN now has a new vision of looking into the possibility to extend her evangelistic outreach to neighboring countries like Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Ghana."

"No longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens. . . ." The Diamond Jubilee Anniversary Celebration praised God for EYN's beginnings, 75 years ago, but recognized that the real beginning was with a crucified and resurrected Savior. Today is the beginning. It may very well be that the verse which describes EYN in years ahead will suggest that they want to fulfill another favorite Kulp verse, that of Christine: ". . . for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9b).

Charles Bieber, of Ephrata, Pa., served as a missionary to Nigeria from 1950 to 1963, working primarily in Garkida and Lassa. Since then he has served as pastor and district executive and was Annual Conference moderator in 1977.

Fond greetings for Mary Dadisman

She came to Nigeria for the first time in October 1941. Mary N. Dadisman started her work there in Garkida, where she combined study of the Bura language with nursing at the Ruth Royer Kulp Memorial Hospital. Her genuine love of people combined with her skills, however, and Mary's missionary career included teaching and administration as well as hospital work.

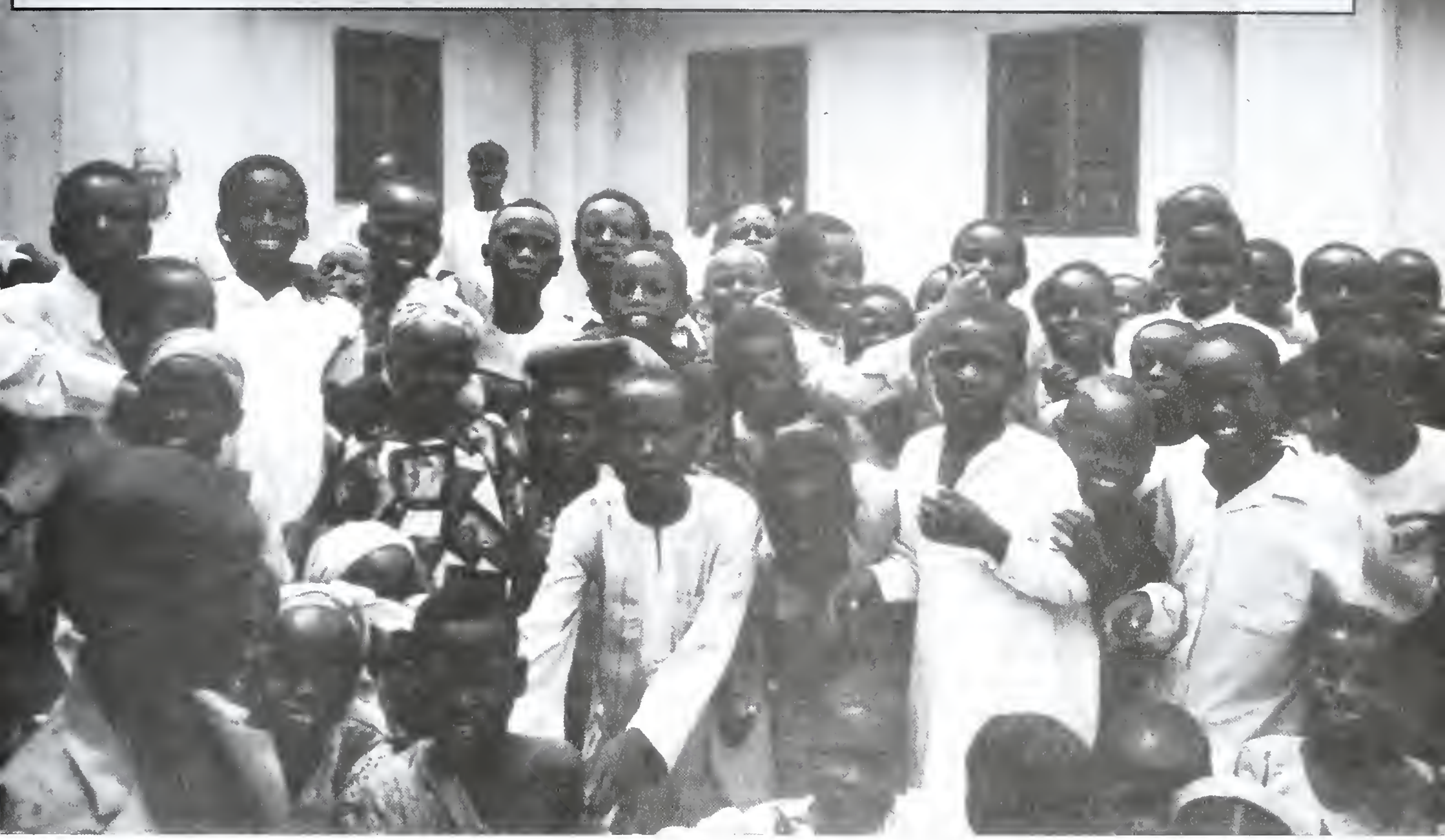
Mary was the first teacher at Hillcrest School when it opened in 1942 for the children of missionaries, and is still remembered fondly by early students. She also served for a time as the principal of Waka Teacher Training School. She was frequently elected to the mission's field committee, which was administratively responsible for the work of the mission in Nigeria. On occasion she would speak in the Garkida church, and from time to time would be the leader in the station prayer meetings.

Most of Mary's ministry, however, was in the hospital, briefly at Lassa but generally at Garkida. A registered nurse, she also had special training in midwifery. She gave of herself so freely and lovingly, as well as skillfully, that she touched hundreds of lives.

One of the tour group to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Christian ministry, Mary was the one most frequently sought and most fondly greeted by Nigerian brothers and sisters. Former patients and former hospital workers expressed deep appreciation and warm welcome. The way she had affected the lives of so many persons became clear to others in the tour group, and we recognized that in her the Church of the Brethren had their own Mother Teresa. —CHARLES BIEBER

Icons, images, impressions

Tour members recount meaningful moments in Nigeria



Children greet *the US tour group at the Lassa EYN church.*

BY DONNA FORBES STEINER

"Do you really want to travel to Nigeria?" "Isn't that a Third World country?" "Won't it have changed?" "Do you need inoculations?"

"Yes" was my answer to each of those questions. But still the yearning to go was compelling. And there were months of preparation. But the greatest preparation was preparation of the heart.

Still vivid were my memories of Nigeria and Hillcrest School in Jos 38 years ago, when I served 26 months in Brethren Volunteer Service. I struggled to preserve the longtime images and to prepare for the inevitable changes. As I desired to cling to my wonderful memories of experiences, beauty, and relationships, I knew in my heart I needed to make room for new impressions. Had I made an idol of all that was before and could not still be? Or could I still look at my mementos of that earlier time —tiny thorn carvings and a carved ivory tusk— and remember?

Madeleine L'Engle defines an icon as "something through which I can look and get a wider glimpse of God." For me these mementos — carefully selected and for which I ruthlessly bargained— along with the precious memories, help me see God.

When I returned to Nigeria last March with a tour group of 31 Brethren, I did observe many changes. I shed tears over lack of recognition of the Hillcrest School compound I had grown to love, because it is now a government-operated school, and much different from when I worked there years ago. I struggled to survive in the dry atmosphere.

But I came away with a new icon. I will always treasure the batik tablecloth and napkins made by Rebecca Samuel Dali, a preacher and teacher, and my newfound friend and sister in Christ. It is an "open window" helping me glimpse the beauty of God through the potential of a woman of leadership, example, and faith. [For more on Rebecca, see "Is Sarah Major alive and well and living in Nigeria?" November 1996.]

Travel to Nigeria elicited many wonderful stories to be relived, retold, and told in new ways. The story theme is common to Americans and Nigerians alike, to the "seasoned" missionary and the short-term volunteer of a few weeks or a few years.

For Irene Bollinger of Manheim, Pa., this trip fulfilled a dream of traveling to the "mission field." For others it was the first experience of traveling to a Third World country. Some traveled to glimpse the country and its beauty, the people and their uniqueness, the church and its vitality. For most in our group this was a memorable return visit, even a "return home."

Here are the reflections of three members of our travel group:

Celia Shankster

Celia Shankster, of Roann, Ind., who served the people in Nigeria for 42 years, recalls our reception at EYN headquarters:

"The president of EYN, Bitrus Kwaji Klwajigwhi Tizhe; the vice president of EYN, Karagama Gadzama; and the secretary general of EYN, Bitrus Bdliya, were all on hand to greet us on our arrival at the offices and to make us feel welcome. We received information from the heads of each of 10 departments.

"The Rural Development Program of Agriculture has encouraged various women's groups to grow soybeans, and this has become a cash crop for them. A revolving loan fund for women is working well. We rejoice in the growth of the church: 132,000 in 1997; now over 140,000 communicant members in 1998. We thrilled at reports of outreach to new tribes around Abuja, the hope of the church in Lagos to reach out to neighboring countries, and the success of approaching Fulbe herders. We applauded news of the eight women taking men's classes at Kulp Bible College, and were amused by the principals' observation that, unless the men took their presence seriously, the women would tie them with their headties.

"After 24 years, theology by extension is still training lay leadership and providing basic Bible knowledge for all church members. We rejoice that the Rural Health Program has been self-supporting since 1991, and we became aware of its need for refrigeration for vaccines and for updated vehicles. We exulted in the report of the opening of a comprehensive secondary school, now with a second intake of 80 students.

"Surely the EYN has embraced the tent-making style of ministry in a wonderful way and is working a transformation in the lives of all her adherents.

"How glad we are for the villages who benefit from the 5,000 wells which the Well Digging Project helped to make possible. How practical to have a school for training mechanics and secretaries. How expedient the literacy classes, now teaching such things as typewriting, sewing, and making mud stoves."

Owen Shankster

Owen Shankster, of Roann, Ind., headed the Well Digging Project for 42 years, and reflects on his goals and methods of attaining them. Telling the story of Ayuba Gwani Shalmighili, Owen admits, "I have often noted, . . . I think too small":

"Ayuba came from the extended family of our one-time evangelist at Waka, Joshua Katsala. Joshua had taken in the children of his brother when the brother died, adding ten to his own family of eight.

"How could he support all these extras on a meager evangelist's income? He bought a sewing machine and did tailoring during his off hours. Thus he managed to pay the fees for Ayuba to attend secondary school.

"At the time Joshua talked of tailoring, I still selfishly wanted all his time for church work. But truly a secondary education was needed for this man before he could obtain a civil engineering degree."

Owen, an engineer of water wells and a designer of church buildings himself, knows a good blueprint when he sees one. This same Ayuba is the civil engineer who has drawn the blueprint and explained to our group the plans for the permanent structure for the first church building at the chosen site in Abuja, the federal capital of Nigeria.

Says Owen Shankster: "Today, I am forced to say, 'Well done, Joshua,' as I look on a civil engineer and the blueprint for a church building befitting the federal capital."

Laurie Kieffaber

Laurie Kieffaber, of Wabash, Ind., affirms the growing potential of Nigerian leadership with this story:

"While staying at the EYN headquarters outside Mubi, my sister and I attended the evening devotions of the secondary school on the compound. A hundred or so students gathered on the cement porch and the bare dirt in front of their sleeping quarters. For 45 minutes they sang hymns in loud, clear voices, smiling, dancing, and clapping their hands. Energy and joy shone in their faces as they praised God. We were privileged to join in their worship, singing along with some of the songs we knew in common and teaching them a few new ones.

"Designated students took turns standing and leading the group in prayer. Some were barely audible while others spoke boldly and from the heart. Miss Yemi, the schoolmistress, critiqued each student's performance. One young lady was told, 'That was fine, Esther, but we could hardly hear you. Remember children, if you are to be good leaders, you must speak loudly and you must speak—'

" 'in English!' the students shouted.

"At the end of the meeting, Miss Yemi asked for volunteers to lead the next night's worship, and many clamored for the job. I was impressed by the strong faith of these young Christians, and am hopeful that the future of the EYN is in good hands."

Each tour member returned from the trip with strong memories, be it an icon, a lingering image, or a latent impression. To be sure, most will remember the heart of the country, its Christian people. They embrace the gospel, the seed of faith that they are committed to nurture for decades and centuries to come.

Is the American church as committed? Our challenge is to stand alongside them in the struggle to help new members understand church polity; to train pastors and leaders; and to express evangelism in ways that spread God's word.

Donna Forbes Steiner, of Landisville, Pa., is associate executive, Atlantic Northeast District.

What American Brethren might learn from Nigerian Brethren

BY CHALMER E. FAW

Parents are sometimes willing to learn from their children if they are desperate enough or have the right kind of humility. Since 1923, when Brethren first took the gospel to Nigeria, new lessons have been in the making for us to consider. What should we learn from our Nigerian friends?

First, we might learn to put a childlike faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Master himself, with a knowledge of the educated of his day, once prayed, "I thank you, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants" (Matt. 11:25). And one of his most intellectually advanced followers stated that though he was far ahead of some of his day in human qualifications, he had come to regard such advantages as loss "because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord" (Phil. 3:8). My personal experience of some 16 years among our people in Nigeria is that illiterate people often possess a grasp of the gospel that is profound and precious.

Along with a childlike faith in Jesus, let us put next an assurance of being born again from above. Our Nigerian converts have accepted what Jesus told the highly sophisticated Nicodemus: "No one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above" (John 3:3). Miracles of regeneration like those of Mary Magdalene, the Prodigal Son, and Saul of Tarsus, are to be expected and treasured above all else, making life on earth a "heaven" in spite of hardships and persecutions.

Daniel Kwaha was a Higi tribesman from the rugged highlands who contracted the dreaded disease of leprosy. This was in the late 1960s. He could no longer walk on his stumps of feet so got a donkey and sat astride it as he rode over his tribal area proclaiming Jesus. Within a few years, he led between 4,000 and 5,000 of his tribe to the Lord. He built up a branch of EYN (Ekklesiyar Yanu'wa a Nigeria) that was to become one of its most evangelistic. I knew "Pastor Daniel" well. He was no educator, but as one who could share Jesus with others, he had no equal.

Others have also demonstrated this miracle of new birth. Mai Sule Biu was from an entirely different part of EYN, a Muslim of high rank, in line to become the Emir of the whole area, but he too contracted leprosy and had to be sent away for treatment. It was in the leprosarium, in the late 1960s, that he first experienced Christian love and through it found himself yielding to the claims of the Lord Jesus. He gave his heart completely to the Lord and, through the skill of medical staff, both expatriate and Nigerian, found his disease arrested.

Then, before long, his talents as a song leader and a powerful speaker became known. He rose to prominence as the Nigerian director of evangelism for the whole area.

A third characteristic of most of our Nigerian Brethren that we might well learn is zeal for Christ. This grows out of their acceptance of Him as the Lord of all life. Like the early Christians in the Book of Acts, once they believe in Jesus and commit all to him, nothing can stop them. He is their main reason for existence.

In the early 1940s, a Bura student named Migawa heard the call of a very primitive neighboring tribe, the Whona, and volunteered to go live among them at great sacrifice to himself, his wife, and family. Each market day as he showed up in Garkida he would be a little thinner, but invariably, when I asked him how he was with all his troubles, he would reply, "Sir, where there is blessing, there is no trouble!"

It was he who insisted that we take the love feast out into the bush where the people were. There he made a witness so powerful that the chief wanted to become a Christian and wanted all his people to as well, because for the first time in his long life he saw a white man, me, get down on his knees and wash an African man's feet.

courtesy BHLA

Daniel Kwaha

A fourth lesson we might learn is how to endure persecution. Opposition to the faith in Nigeria comes in many different forms and to various degrees, ranging from mild social pressure to bloody purges. We American Brethren have had little experience of martyrdom.

But in Nigeria, persecution has become a fact of life. The witness of the Nigerians is distinctively Christian enough so that it's clear they are being attacked primarily because they are followers of Jesus, or, as Acts puts it, that they are "considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name" (Acts 5:41). This then calls for faithfulness in following the Lord. And it means they will persevere, no matter what the cost of their stand. This will not be an easy lesson to learn, but we may well need to learn it if we are to be true to our calling. M.

Chalmer Faw, of McPherson, Kan., served as a village worker in Garkida, Nigeria, from 1940 to 1945, then was professor of New Testament at Bethany Theological Seminary for 20 years. In 1965 he returned to Nigeria, where he was a Bible teacher at Kulp Bible College and the Theological College of Northern Nigeria.

Start your engines, team!

A graduation to remember

BY MERVIN KEENEY
AS TOLD BY JOHN AND
JANET TUBBS

Janet Tubbs

John Tubbs, center, *with Mason Technical School students. The 1998 classes, the largest ever, graduated 12 mechanics and 18 secretaries.*

For graduation at Mason Technical School our staff wanted to demonstrate the quality of the school's training in automotive mechanics. We decided to grab people's attention by assembling our two practice engines from start to finish during the graduation ceremony.

Our four top graduates were to do the assembling, two on each engine. The demonstration engines, a Nissan and a Toyota, were purchased by the late co-founder of our school, Ralph Mason, and mounted on stands he had built.

The graduation ceremony was conducted in front of an old mission house turned into classrooms. About an hour before the graduation ceremony, we moved the two engines to the courtyard. There our students took each engine completely apart. The pistons, the heads, and components large and small were laid on tables beside the engine stands.

About 500 people gathered for the graduation ceremony, including the top leadership of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. After the welcome and opening words, we explained what we were planning. Many people shook their heads at the suggestion that the pile of parts could be rebuilt within the time frame of the graduation exercises. The crowd was clearly intrigued by the challenge we had set for ourselves.

The ceremony proceeded with introductions, five or six speeches, and music coming from the low porch at the front of the building. Off to the side, the four students were gradually building the engines piece by piece. The audience watched with a growing sense of excitement, paying more attention perhaps to the mechanics than to the speakers.

About 10 minutes before the graduates were to receive their diplomas, the engines were assembled. By now, we had grown a bit hesitant over starting both at the same time, wondering whether this had really been a good idea. We began to realize that it would be difficult to redeem a failure. But Daniel, the teacher for the automotive practical shop, was confident of the ability of his students.

So the mechanics put gasoline in the carburetors, hooked up batteries, and, on signal, cranked and turned over both engines. They both started!

The observers began jumping and shouting like we had just made the touchdown that won the Super Bowl! Added to the clapping was the trilling sound of women expressing joy. The tension of the audience gave way to triumph.

Two of the students working on the engines were from Garkida, so this event touched the host community in a special way. The chief of Garkida was so impressed that he remarked that soon Americans would be bringing their cars all the way to Garkida to be repaired, and that in time Garkida would be building cars and shipping them all over the world.

A couple of days later we were in the town of Biu exploring with a banker the prospect of an office management student serving as an apprentice at the bank. All the banker wanted to talk about was what he had heard about the two engines being successfully assembled at the graduation.

Mason Technical School had become the talk not only of Garkida, but of Borno and Adamwa states as well.

Mervin Keeney is director of Global Mission Partnerships for the General Board. This story was told to him by John and Janet Tubbs teachers and consultants for the Mason (EYN) Technical School in Garkida, Nigeria.

Disaster response with a difference

After the Manchester church learned of a murder in its sister congregation in El Salvador, help was on the way

Story and photos by Worth Weller

It is no secret that the Brethren have historically displayed excellence in responding to disasters and natural emergencies. Their tradition of rapidly mobilizing resources to bring God's love and desperately needed services to stricken communities is rich and deep.

But what happens when the disaster is not flood, fire, tornado or hurricane? What if the disaster is a brutal murder?

Just what is the appropriate response to a violent act that strikes fear and dismay at the very heart of a faith community?

Such was the challenge faced by the Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind., this spring when a startling e-mail message — in Spanish —rippled across the computer screen of youth group member Ben Weller.

"Dad — I think this message says that César Lopez has been assassinated!"

Impossible. César Lopez? The civil war in El Salvador has been over for six years. The death squads have been disbanded. Surely no one, at this late date, would want to kill the widely beloved leader of the war orphan program of Iglesia Emmanuel Bautista, Manchester's sister congregation in San Salvador.

But Ben was persistent, shock clearly on his face. Pointing to a line of Spanish text on the computer screen, he said, "No, Dad, it says right here — he was gunned down, just a block from the church, by four bullets in the back. At least that's what I think it says."

Unfortunately, Ben's translation of the e-mail message from San Salvador was accurate. César Lopez, the vice president of the church board for Iglesia Emmanuel Bautista and director of the church's war orphan program, was 32 years old when he was killed on April 17 this year. Because the war orphans came from remote areas which had been most heavily devastated by the civil war, he had been deeply involved in the church's mission projects in those areas.

Villagers of Los Talpetátes *must go long distances for drinkable water. The peace park being developed with the help of the Manchester Church of the Brethren and by this summer's Brethren workcamp there includes a deep well project.*

As Ben forwarded the unsettling message around the congregation, members of the parish-to-parish committee and the witness commission mobilized to begin planning a response.

That Sunday Ben stood before the congregation to announce the tragic news. The throats of many choked — particularly those who had hosted youth from Iglesia Emmanuel or had themselves visited their sister church — as Ben, in a halting, broken voice, pausing to fight back tears, told the sad tale.

Speaking from the pulpit along with youth group member Ambrosia Brown, youth leader Jan Rhoades, and church moderator Beverly Eikenberry, all of whom had been in San Salvador the summer before and knew César well, Ben described the work of his friend.

"César was a man, a father, who loved his country, who loved his people.

"He gave everything he had — all of his time, all of his love, all of his money — to the care of the orphans his church rescued from the war.

"Ultimately he gave his life."

Also that Sunday, pastor Susan Boyer, who too had visited her sister parish the summer before, announced that members David Rogers and I had been called by the executive board to fly to San Salvador to represent the congregation at the memorial service for César the following Sunday, May 3. We had been asked to carry a substantial special offering from the congregation in honor of César's life and work, and we were instructed to bring back suggestions for further ways in which the Manchester congregation could stand in solidarity with Iglesia Emmanuel.

Pastor Miguel Tomás Castro, *right, presents a wooden chalice to David Rogers of the North Manchester congregation as a gift from the San Salvador church to its sister church in Indiana.*

"It was very important for us to be there, to stand side by side with our sister congregation, because this relationship has reminded us over the years that we are indeed all part of the same body of Christ," said pastor Susan. "Our relationship through Christ transcends boundaries of country borders, of north-south and east-west distances. We needed to be there in person, to mourn César's death, to honor that relationship."

Miguel Tomás Castro, pastor of Iglesia Emmanuel Bautista, picked us up at the airport when we arrived in San Salvador. "His death was to us — how do you say — so devastating," he told me while weaving in and out of heavy traffic.

"Without César, we were immobilized. Our loss, our grief was so great," added Tomás, who lost his own brother to death squads during the war.

The April 17 assassination of César was by an assassin with a handgun on the crowded streets of San Salvador a block away from the church. Although it turned out this was a professional job, it did not appear to be politically motivated. Yet it brought back the terrible fear and uncertainty that had plagued the congregation six years ago as they pushed forward their mission work for the poor in the very heart of the war-torn areas of the country.

As he drove us from the airport, Tomás went on to explain that it was very important to the Emmanuel congregation to make something positive from the murder of César. Otherwise, the shock, the grief, and the return of the bitter memories of the decade-long civil war would continue to immobilize them.

"From his martyrdom came a lot of illumination, great brightness. We need to utilize this brightness for the life of the community," stressed Tomás.

"And it is important for us to know that you, the Brethren — the *Hermanos* and *Hermanas* — walk with us in our time of sorrow and need."

As luck — no, faith — would have it, César at the time of his death had been working on a proposal to revitalize the economic and social fabric of a cluster of four small, remote villages in the war-torn province of Usulután. The proposal, coauthored by Tomás's bilingual daughter Lydia Marie, a communications major at the San Salvador university, was researched on-site with the assistance of the leaders of the villages and the members of Emmanuel's mission congregation in Usulután.

It calls for the development of a "peace park" in the central village of Los Talpetátes.

The several acres of land donated by the village to this effort — land turned over to them as a result of the peace accords which ended the civil war in 1992 — include a beautiful, shady spot under the massively spreading branches of a 300-year-old Conacáste tree. The tree will be a central feature of the park, in this otherwise practically treeless and arid region at the base of the volcanic mountains that border the river Lempa.

David Rogers and I made the grueling three-hour ride in a four-wheel drive diesel truck the day before César's memorial service to see for ourselves where the Manchester congregation could specifically fit into the work of Iglesia Emmanuel. There village leaders explained to them that the purpose of the park was central to their recovery from the war.

"We need to raise up the community of God, to create a new community to replace the old political relationships developed and destroyed by the war," said community leader Jorge Alberto.

Juan Antonio Sánchez, director of missions for Iglesia Emmanuel, explained that a central goal of the church in all its mission work is to develop new relationships in communities. It seeks relationships that transcend the old political barriers of the war years and instead focus on faith and the common bonds that improve the quality of life in a community.

"The federal government provides absolutely no services to these villages. No schools, no power, no water, no clinics. So with the help of other churches and other non-government organizations from North America and Europe, we have to step in," he reported.

"But none of it works for long," Sánchez cautioned, "if you don't start by building new relationships. Relationships based in faith that encompass the entire community. Relationships that give them better ownership of their own lives."

Sánchez said it was very significant that the people of Los Talpetátes had donated the land for this project. "They are not asking us to do something for them. They are seeking our assistance to do something for themselves."

The park — likely to be named in honor of César Lopez — is considerably more than a park.

A Brethren workcamp there this past June devoted its stay in Usulután to building extensive playground equipment and a gazebo. A consortium of European churches and relief agencies is providing financial assistance and guidance to help the villages build a daycare center in the park. And the Manchester congregation is being asked to fund a fence to keep the cattle out, as well as the materials for the playground equipment and gazebo.

A separate project, funded by the European community churches, brings water to the park, which will serve as the source of water for the area, comprising some 300 families. It will replace the shallow wells that provide only warm, volcanic water, and the unsanitary irrigation canals where the village washing is now done.

Pastor Tomás noted that although the focus of the new park is on children, the actuality of including the whole village in the planning and construction would touch every level of community life.

"We have learned — faced with the enormous disaster of the war, the destruction of our environment, the wreckage of our economy, and the rendering of our social fabric — that the obstacles are overwhelming unless we all cooperate in focusing our energies and finding one spot where we can push the hardest, to get the most results," observed Tomás.

He noted that the focal point, the common point where long-lasting change can be achieved in El Salvador, is the youth.

Tomás told Rogers and me that he had been particularly moved in this regard when the Manchester congregation last June sent five representatives of its youth group — Ambrosia Brown, Erin Kindy, Nate Shull, Ben Weller, and Heidi Yoder — along with youth leader Jan Rhoades, to be with Emmanuel's youth group for a week.

"This is the love of God at work. That young people from one country can be so moved to action and concern for the young people of another country. This touches my heart," he said, with his hand to his chest.

"For churches and communities in El Salvador and across the world where oppression, underemployment, and environmental catastrophe are everyday facts of life, our hope is that God will improve our lives in the future by working through our young people today. This is our faith," he added.

And such is the faith of the Brethren in responding to new levels of modern disasters.

Worth Weller is publisher of the North Manchester News-Journal. He is former chair of the witness commission of Manchester Church of the Brethren. He visited the congregation's sister church once before, in 1996.

Brethrening

Angela's heavenly encounter

Hi! My name is Angela Beaty. I am 12 years old. I want to tell you about something very special that happened to me this summer.

I was having a great day. Several of my friends and I were treated by our parents to go to Eastwood, a popular swimming area. My friend's mom stayed with us at the pool while my mom did some errands. I had decided to start working on my tan so I laid out the blanket in the sun.

Then a voice in my head told me to go to the park's largest slide instead. At the top of the ladder was a girl who looked no older than four. I asked her if she knew how to swim. "Yes," she said. Still having some doubt, I asked her if her mother knew that she was at the big slide. She told me, "no."

The big slide ended in water 11 feet deep. I was concerned that she would have trouble at the deep end. I asked her if I could go down before her to catch her—just in case. She agreed.

I went down the slide and waited for her to come down. She yelled, "I'm coming!" Like a bullet she shot out of the slide over my head into the deep water. Without even thinking of what could happen, I swam out and carried her back to the edge of the pool.

The lifeguard waved us over to her stand. As we went, the little girl told everyone, "I was drowning for a minute; she saved my life!"

The lifeguard asked me to take the girl back to her mother. The little girl was still scared, so I carried her. Her mother looked startled at seeing a strange girl carrying her daughter. "Where have you been?" she asked angrily. The little girl pointed at the big slide. The mother turned deathly white. "Did you go down?"

"Yes," I told her. I explained what had happened. Her mother thanked me over and over again, and asked me my name. "Angela," I replied.

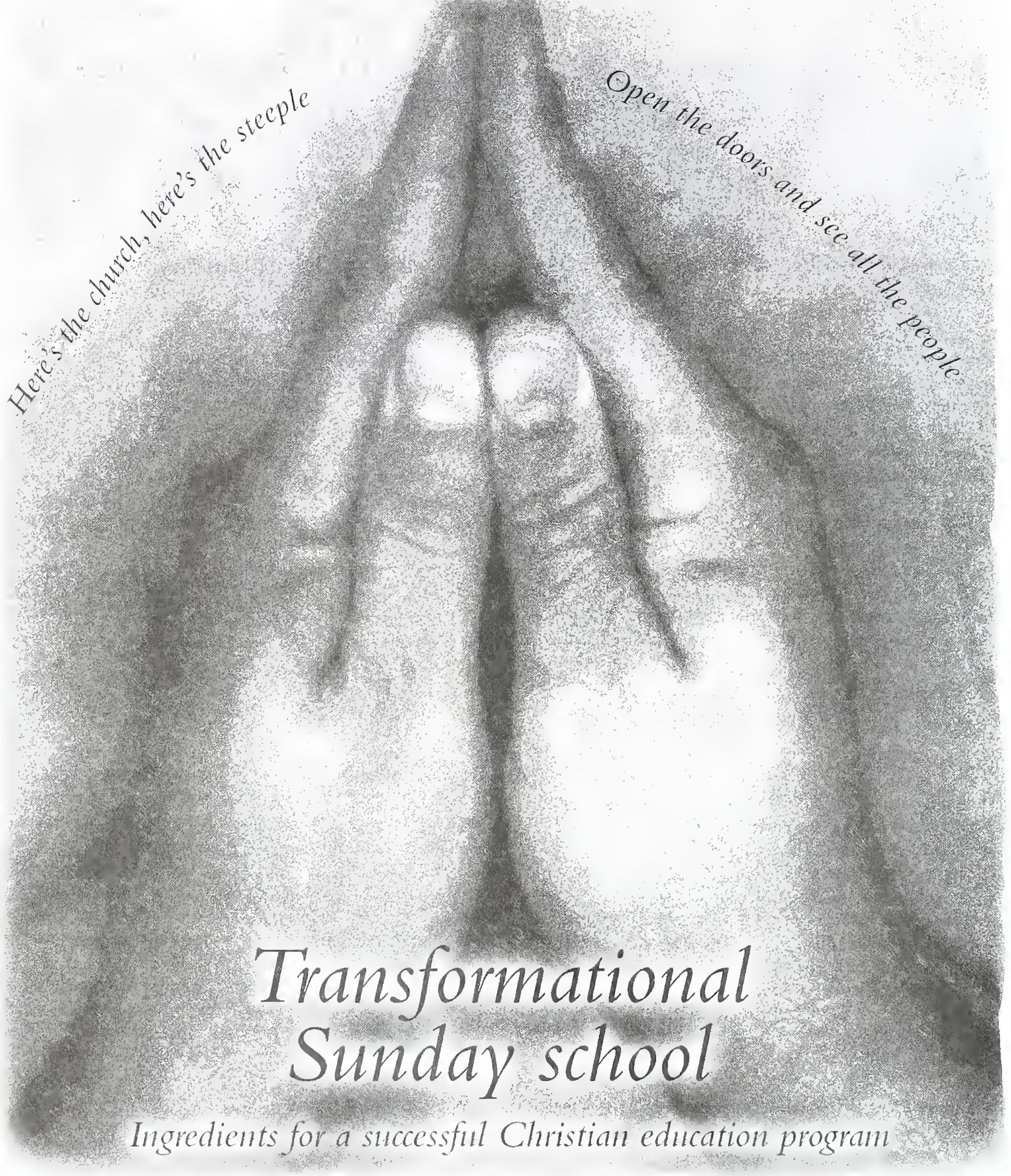
The little girl looked at me in awe and said slowly, "Angela! Angel!"

After saying goodbye I started crying and wouldn't tell anybody why. Then I explained in detail to the lifeguard and my friend's mom what had happened.

When I got home, I told the story to my mom. She was surprised, but she told me something I hadn't realized—that God had spoken to me. I tried to remember what the voice sounded like so I could recognize it if I heard it again. My mom said that God speaks to different people in different ways. Sometimes it may be the voice of a grown person or a small child, just a voice in my head like I had experienced, or even just a thought. She said that the important thing was that I obeyed.—ANGELA BEATY

Angela Beaty is in seventh grade and is a junior member of Eastwood Church of the Brethren, Akron, Ohio. She volunteers as a reader to younger children in an outreach ministry of the church.

MESSENGER *would like to publish other short, colorful, humorous or poignant stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submission to* MESSENGER, *1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at ffarrar_gb@brethren.org.*


Here's the church, here's the steeple
Open the doors and see all the people

Marianne Sackett

Transformational Sunday school

Ingredients for a successful Christian education program

BY DAVID S. YOUNG

Eugene Lichty raises a good question, "Whatever happened to the Sunday school?"[See June Messenger]. The key to a successful Sunday school is important to find. Often Sunday school is an indicator of growth for the church as a whole. There are some growing and thriving Sunday schools that are leading to very significant growth in churches.

I became interested in what makes for a successful Sunday school some 20 years ago when our Sunday school at the Bush Creek Church of the Brethren in Monrovia, Md., was recognized for a successful Sunday school. This came after the church worked at on-site teacher training, developing teams of teachers, and community outreach.

So when the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the Brethren asked that I do a study of successful Sunday schools in the Believer's Church tradition, I was interested in trying to identify what factors work in our faith tradition and in our changing culture.

People make Sunday schools happen, and they give credit to divine Providence.

I found five outstanding Sunday schools, in Brethren, Mennonite, and American Baptist churches, and visited each one. None were located on a major road or intersection. None had any particular set of circumstances that made them boom rapidly. In fact, none said that they felt they were that special, and they said so.

They were all growing, however—some steadily, some more rapidly. They faced hurdles but overcame them. People make it happen in these Sunday schools, and credit is given to prayer and divine Providence.

From these five churches, I identified 12 factors that contributed to their success: 1) agape love, 2) spiritual nurturing, 3) Bible study, 4) teachers, 5) leadership, 6) adult education, 7) interaction, 8) physical resources, 9) pastoral staff, 10) meeting needs, 11) people factor, and 12) building on strengths.

Agape love

Love was evident in each of these churches. People accepted one another's differences. At none of these churches was I drawn aside to listen to someone complain. People were affirmed. New people were invited. People reached out to one another. Large or small, these churches had a love factor at work.

In one large church, the congregation was broken down into shepherding groups. People in the groups cared for one another and related needs to one another. The groups were led by a shepherd and during Sunday school there is a shepherd's class offered on how to do caring ministry.

Spiritual nurturing

Secondly, nurturing of faith of adults was a priority. Enthusiasm for the inner journey of faith was quickly recognizable. The Alban Institute's study of 16 churches of mainline denominations reveals the same. Unless people go deeper in their spiritual journey within two or three visits to the church, they soon stop coming.

One church had 10 active adult classes. Each operated as a small faith nurturing group. Dorothy Harnish, a Mennonite, now of the Parish Resource Center in Lancaster, Pa., noted how in the Believer's Church tradition, faith transformation is at the heart of our work.

Bible study

The Bible is the guide. In all these churches, there was a sense of wanting to know Jesus. The Bible was never used as a proof text or as a weapon. There was a sincerity to the faith quest. At the meeting I had with each church, we included a portion of scripture for a devotional. In each case there was a desire to go deeper in the text and to seek how to apply these teachings to current living.

Teachers

Good teachers are crucial for a growing Sunday school. Good teachers prepare ahead, are dedicated, provide interesting classes, are excited about teaching, and allow feedback. Getting good teachers requires effort. The best plans for teacher recruitment were the most systematic. Skills inventories are used. Teachers rotate. Teachers ask teachers to teach.

In these Sunday schools there was little turnover of teachers. At one of the churches, teachers took children on field trips. At another, teachers' meetings were turned into quarterly training events. Good teachers are nurtured, trained, and appreciated.

Leadership

All of these Sunday schools are well organized with good leaders doing a lot of hard work. Leaders in these churches plan ahead, use people to help, and do necessary followup.

Adult education

For years the philosophy has been to get the children, and then the adults will follow. But study and experience has shown the opposite to be true. Adult education is a clear emphasis for transformational Sunday schools. Adult education has a combination of input and interaction. Classes study substantial curriculum, often chosen by topic. Much attention is given to the educational experience. New adult classes are being started in each church.

In the Believer's Church tradition, as adults come to faith, they guide the children. Open discussions and a variety of classes and service projects make for something alive happening for adults.

Interaction

In these growing Sunday schools, there is a lot of interaction among class members, as well as with those outside their group. Surveys revealed that there was little unresolved conflict that would hamper the church's decision-making process. People were allowed to make mistakes. Humor abounded.

Not only did people get along, but they went beyond themselves to do things for others, like helping to parent children other than their own. One church had a family night. At another, people took off work to put a roof on their new addition.

Physical resources

Why put money into bricks and mortar? These churches called their building "building resources." The focus of the building was on mission. The debate, if there was any, was more on what kind of facility would match their growing needs.

At one of the churches, a horse shed

was transformed into a workshop and a room for children. A gym was part of another new facility. All the buildings were well maintained, had ramps to accommodate the disabled, and had basketball hoops. Bulletin boards were well maintained.

Pastors

In each case, pastors were supportive of the Sunday school. However, in most of my meetings, it was the Sunday school leaders, rather than the pastors, who spoke. These pastors exhibited a kind of servant leadership. Pastors included the Sunday school in sermons or during their home visits invited families to Sunday school. Pastors supported the Sunday school leaders and teachers.

And the churches appreciated their pastors. Associate pastors or other staff members besides the pastor were not viewed as second class. Organizing, preaching, visiting, finding resources, setting up workshops, and helping coordinate events were common for staff. Pastors were clearly in there pitching. A team spirit prevailed.

Meeting needs

Meeting needs was clearly evident in these Sunday schools. Helping participants to have a satisfying classroom experience was important. Teachers used pictures, learning centers, and creative means to present the lesson. Audiovisuals were used. Teachers and pupils had a warm relationship.

These churches were concerned with presenting the Christian message in a positive manner. This was matched with being aware of the present needs of people and being supportive, caring, and helping. These churches were careful not to break up longstanding relationships between people when they established new classes to accommodate growth. Leaders responded to needs of the moment and adapted accordingly.

People factor

The "people factor" is about individuals who over a long period made a tremendous impact on the Sunday school. At one of the churches there is a "candy man," who developed a special relationship with children. Special people are noted for their interest, consistency, and effectiveness.

At another church it was the pastor who started the shepherding groups. At another, a farming family made an impact. At one Sunday school, a superintendent visited children in the kindergarten class for 30 years. Families always awaited the time when their children would be in this department. These special people left a great legacy.

Building on strengths

None of these churches are focusing on their weaknesses or trying to copy what another "successful" church is doing. Rather they are seeking where they are called by God to unique ministries. In church renewal there is always the question of where to begin. Do we seek first to determine weaknesses and correct them, or do we identify strengths and build on them to meet weaknesses?

Each of these churches moved in the direction of the energy they had. At one church, building on strengths was named as key to success. Through the study, churches seemed to be affirmed in their efforts. They had confidence about what they were doing. They felt God was helping them to grow.

Transformational Sunday schools are possible. If a church takes a mission statement and translates it into the plan of ministry, the Sunday school can be identified as one focus. On-site teacher training can save time in lesson preparation. Resources can be brought in. Mentoring programs can be established. Mid-week children's clubs or family nights can work in synch with the Sunday school. Teachers can be appreciated. A vital ministry for the church can be affirmed.

David S. Young is interim pastor of the Mohler Church of the Brethren, Ephrata, Pa., and is adjunct professor in church renewal at Eastern Baptist Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa. He is author of Servant Leadership and Church Renewal, Shepherds by the Living Springs, *to be published by Herald Press in May 1999. He will teach at Princeton Seminary in the spring.*

Brethrening

Who's the boss?

I have a vivid memory of an experience during my childhood when I was being unusually precocious. I was being "asked" by my mother to do a particular chore. I did not wish to comply with the request. At a certain point in the discussion, what was once a request became a directive. I remember asking my mom why she could boss me around. She replied, in an attempt to end the discussion, that she was the boss. As I was trudging off to do the chore, I thought I had the last word by asking, "When do I get to be the boss?"

Some 35 years later, I received my answer. When I began my service on Jan. 1, 1998, as executive director of the Association of Brethren Caregivers, my mother was within one month of completing a year of service as an ABC Lafiya community nurse in Caimito, Puerto Rico. I promptly informed her that, at long last, I was her boss, even though it would only be for a short time. She provided the indisputable response: "That may be true, but you'll never be my mother."—Steve Mason

Steve Mason, of Elgin, Ill., is executive director of the Association of Brethren Caregivers. His mother is Mary Mason Peckover of Sebring, Fla.

Take The Pledge

Sandy Adams
Carrie Albright
Linetta Alley
Catherine Alter
Martha Anderegg
Troy Anderegg
Carol Anderson
Michelle Anderson
Roger Anna
Phil Carlos Archbold
Evelyn Argabright
Dale Aukerman
Darin Austin
Gail Azinger
Ken Azinger
Luke Azinger
Martha Bachman
Haley Baldwin
Shayna Baldwin
Elaine Barajois
Arthur Barber
Ben Barkey
Johnny Barr
John Bather
Ruth Bauman
Nick Beam
Katrina Beaverstad
Amanda Beckwith
Ned Bennett
Hazel Berkey
Dick Bernas
Joanne Bernas
Cherika Berrios
Elizabeth Bidgood
Tony Blackwell
Robert Blake
Jordan Blevins
Chris Blouch
Shari Boone
Susannah Bortner
Andre Bowman
Samuel Bowman
Erma Brooks
Ambrosia Brown
Dale Brown
Merle Brown
Paul Brownell
Sue Brownell
Robin Brubaker
Nat Bryan
Regina Bryan
Jessica Buchanan
Connie Burkholder
Victor Burkholder
Amy Butler
Bruce Butler
Christa Byler
Amy Cadette
Pierre Cadette
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Michaela Camps
Sally Jo Caracheo
Rachel Carroll
Franklin Cassel
Harriet Cassell
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Harano Childs
Laura Clark
Ruth Clark
Allison Clary
Carol Clary
Paul Claypool
Eldon Coffman
Kathlyn Coffman
Daniel Cole
Melissa Collett
Donald Collier
Doris Comerford
Fernando Corondo
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Milagros Cruz
Elizabeth Cupp
Martha Cupp
Marius Cybulski
Michael Cyngier
Shirley Darby
Karin Davidson
Jessica Davis
Nathan Davis
Arlene Deardorff
Nancy DeBliek
Ruth Delano
Janet Detweiler
Lois Dickason
Jennifer Dilling
Joe Dilling
Anita Disbro
John Disbro
Nora Ditmars
Skye Dobberstein
Drew Domer-Shank
Chris Douglas
Stephanie Dowty
Carol Dubble
Kirby Dubble
Jessica Dull
Ruth Early
Stephanie Eastes
Fred Edmonds
Rob Edmonds
Gwen Edwards
Debra Eisenbise
Jaime Eller
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Nina Elliot
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David Erbaugh
Nan Erbaugh
Noah Erbaugh
J Phillip Esau
Patricia Esau
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Fae Heckert
J B Heckert
Ruth Heckman
Penny Heddings
Jon Heggen
Nora Heggen
Lowell Heisey
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Donna March
Bridget Marchio
Ester Marchio
Debra Martin
Myra Martin-Adkins
Betty Mason
Earl Mason
Frank Mason
Treva Mathur
Rachel McCann
Kelli McCauliff
Linda McCauliff
Elayne McClanen
Jessica McInnis
Daniel McKay
David McKellip
Matt McKimmy
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David McRoberts
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Margaret Zinn
Phil Zinn
Leah Zuck
Nevin Zuck
Wayne Zunkel

...They did!

I WON'T FIGHT TO KILL

I WILL fight injustice
I WILL fight hatred
I WILL fight racism
I WILL fight hunger
I WILL fight to make sure that everyone has what they need to live as God intends

I. JUST.
WON'T. FIGHT. TO. KILL.

The White Rose

In the early 1940's youthful members of the German White Rose were put to death for daring to cry out publicly against the evils of Nazism and its racist war machine. As members of the privileged Aryan racial group, they could have remained silent and safe. They chose instead, in spite of great risk, to make their values known to the citizens of their nation. In memory of the spirit of their courage in speaking out, the White Rose has been chosen as the symbol for the "Take the Pledge" campaign.

To Take The Pledge, contact
The Office of Brethren Witness, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694; 1-800-323-8039; Email: Witness_gb@Brethren.org.

Letters

Empires and nations eventually collapse under the burden of their own self-importance. God's kingdom is eternal. We must choose whether "Christ is Lord," or "We have no king but Caesar."

Choosing Christ or Caesar

I'm responding to Robert Saylor's July critique of the 1970 Annual Conference statement on war.

Some $250 billion in current military spending may be shy of the $300 billion in interest payments on the national debt, yet it's still a lot of money, and defense spending contributed greatly to the debt.

Annual Conference statements are intended to present our discernment of God's will, using the New Testament as our rule of faith and practice. Such papers should state a position as clearly as possible. They are not intended as polls of private opinion, or referendums on public policy.

Loving and compassionate lives will commonly keep us out of conflict with governments. Yet proper submission and respect for civil authority doesn't imply absolute obedience. Ultimately, the power of civil authority is founded on lethal force. Rather than attempting to reconcile deadly force and God's love, we would do well to follow the recommendation of the early Brethren to "count the cost." Public witness needs to focus on faithfulness.

Empires and nations eventually collapse under the burden of their own self-importance. God's kingdom is eternal. We must choose whether "Christ is Lord," or "We have no king but Caesar."

Tom Wagner
Muskegon, Mich.

Military is the enemy

After reading Dale Aukerman's "The problem with pluralism" and Prof. Saylor's letter "Statement on war" in the July MESSENGER, I was challenged to think about the Church of the Brethren and its influence in America. I believe its greatest achievement has been in "service work," but theologically it is very quiet.

Jesus went about doing good and healing when called upon. He also opposed oppression and defied "religion" as it was expressed by the religious rulers, exposing their greed and suppression of the people. His fight against "falseness" took him all the way to Calvary. And he called on his followers to carry on.

For several hundred years Christians had no part with military service until Constantine "baptized" his armies. Christianity has been compromised ever since. It's my opinion that military service has been the greatest enemy of the church. The Church of the Brethren, with other peace groups, took a valiant stand with Civilian Public Service. Since then we have been a compromising people in a compromising church in a compromising world.

As we come to a new century, are we willing to be challenged to change from the Church of the Brethren to the Church of the Radical Jesus?

Ronald Gordley
St. Petersburg, Fla.

Whence separatists?

Call us what you will, either Brethren, or Dunker, or Old Order, we are separatists whether we like it or not. We will have separatist bones as long as we live.

As a peculiar people we feel called to be different. We are afraid of prevailing winds. We stand out, stand up, and stand for. We are uneasy with compromise.

In the past, we have relied on authorities with power to keep separatism from breaking us apart. We have used the power of the presiding elder, official board, executive committee, or Scripture as the final authority.

In the future, will we harbor fear and ride safely aloof among our own kind in an ark? Or will we keep faith in Christ's commandment to risk investment of love within mainstream American city life?

Inez Lon
New Oxford, Pa

Pietists influenced Schiller

I think it would be of interest to MESSENGER readers to learn that Friedrich Schiller, one of the great figures of German literature (1759-1805), was influenced by Pietist thought and expressed that influence in his poetry and drama.

His most famous work, "Hymn to Joy," was the basis for the choral part of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which used only two stanzas. The entire nine stanzas read like a litany of Brethren thought, expecially in our day and age. Incidentally, he discovered psychology and wholistic health almost 200 years ago.

John Forbe
Rio Piedras, P.R

Manager, Emergency Response/ Service Ministries

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For more information contact:
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Office of Human Resources
Church of the Brethren General Board

Seeing the Brethren through eyes of color

Nancy and Irvin Heishman

We traveled to Annual Conference this year eager to introduce new riends to the larger Church of the Brethren. Guillermo and Marisel Olivencia traveled with us. They are the pastors of the Hispanic fellowship that meets in our church (First Church, Harrisburg, Pa.). They joined our congregation on Easter Sunday. Also with us were Alfred and Mia Williams, new African-American friends. Rev. Al's ordination was transferred to the Church of the Brethren in February. Through their "eyes" we saw our denomination in a whole new light. It looked very "white."

Let us share some examples. "Oh, you're a Brethren!" a surprised conferencegoer exclaimed, as if that's not to be expected of a person of color. Actually, licensed minister Belita Mitchell is the second generation of her family to be Brethren. A member of the Imperial Heights congregation, her children and grandchildren are third- and fourth-generation Brethren. How long does such a family need to be in the church before being seen as an integral part of our faith community?

We learned that the denominational restructuring process left many ethnic minorities among us feeling pushed even further to the margins of the Brethren family. In addition, denominational funding cuts have left many of their congregations struggling to survive.

Indeed, it did seem that non-white Brethren were falling through the cracks of the new structure. Spanish-speaking Brethren from Puerto Rico and elsewhere found that no translation services were available at Conference this year. African-Americans found that no events were planned to bring them together. No new minorities were elected to office, although Stafford Frederick, who was already on the General Board, was elected by the board to the executive committee. There were no minority preachers. The one appearance of African-American youth in worship was in a drama on welfare reform. The youth did an outstanding job, but the association of blacks with welfare was unfortunate, especially given the invisibility of African-Americans generally this year. No Hispanic hymns were sung in worship. We were grateful to see that a Haitian choir was invited to sing and that one African-American worship leader was chosen.

We heard deeply discouraged ethnic leaders saying, "Do Brethren want us?" "We feel like we've been set back five years. We're going backward instead of forward." "We're invisible." "Will the 'Brethren and Black Americans' paper ever be fulfilled?" "Does the denomination want to help us grow or not?" "Is there a future for us in the church?" The pain felt by these Brethren made our hearts ache too.

The first impressions of the folks we were traveling with were mixed. Sister Mia said, "I just overlooked the things that could insult and stayed focused on what God wanted to say to me." The Olivencias had fun making new friends and dreaming about how to work with others to share the good news of Christ.

Once home from conference, Rev. Al decided, after a time of prayer and reflection, that his future would not be with the Brethren. "I'm not a Martin Luther King," he sighed, "I can see that a lot of Brethren churches would never accept me as pastor because I'm black. Even in those that would, I would have to spend a lot of time and energy just helping people understand and respect black culture and traditions. I just don't have the energy for that at this point in my life."

The Olivencias found more reason for hope but commented that they would not remain as quiet at next year's conference! Interestingly, it seems that Brethren can embrace some ethnic groups more quickly than they can our black brothers and sisters. Maybe this is why the Olivencias found more reason for hope, even though Hispanic Brethren were deeply distressed this year too.

There were also some encouraging signs of hope. We met José Matamoras, the new pastor of the Winter Park Church of the Brethren in Florida. He was hired by this forward-looking congregation in order to help the mostly "Anglo" congregation reach out to the Hispanics moving into its changing neighborhood. Another sign of hope was the meeting organized by Congregational Life Team leaders Jan Kensinger, Linda McCauliff, and Don Myers. They gathered representatives from congregations in Area One to plan an urban consultation. These representatives expressed strong interest in opening the doors of their congregations to their neighbors of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Annual Conference is in many ways a reflection of who we are as Brethren. Because of that, we can't expect the Annual Conference officers and staff alone to heal the wounds of brokenness among us. They can't. That responsibility lies with all of us who are part of the larger church.

We left this conference with sadness, realizing that there is a tremendous need for racial reconciliation among us. It's discouraging to see that we have such a long way to go in this area. Yet, we remain hopeful that our denomination might yet commit itself to fully embrace ethnic brothers and sisters and to grow spiritually as an increasingly multicultural church.

Irvin and Nancy Heishman are co-pastors of First Church of the Brethren, Harrisburg, Pa.

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INVITATIONS

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POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Executive for Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska, a statewide Christian ecumenical organization of eleven denominations. Qualified individuals (lay or ordained) will bring a mature commitment to Jesus Christ, integrity, visionary goals, self motivated leadership, and openness to diverse cultures and Christian traditions. Skills should include: Fostering cooperative relationships, articulate communication, organizational development, fund sources and grant writing. Responsibilities involve administration, working with staff, volunteers, Board, ecumenical partners and other agencies. Salary $25k-30k plus benefits (part time with projected goal of full time). Offices in Lincoln, NE (pop. 200,000+). Request information and application from: Search Chair, The Rev. Dave Daubert, 4980 S. 118th Street, Suite D, Omaha, NE 68137. Application deadline December 1, 1998. AA/EEO.

The Camp Harmony Board of Directors is seeking applications for the position of "Associate Director." This position will be a management position. Salary will be commensurate with skill level and educational background, taking into consideration the 1998 Pastoral Salary Scale as adopted by Annual Conference. This position will be responsible for helping to develop and implement the Camp Harmony Program. Responsibilities will include directing the summer camping program, developing year round programming initiatives, assisting in year round management of facilities and staffing. The individual should have a background in outdoor ministries and have a strong commitment to the church. Because a large number of user groups here at Camp Harmony make use of our team challenge program, a background in conflict resolution, peer mediation or challenge course programming would be useful. Applicants should respond to the camp office with a written resume, salary requirements and three letters of reference by November 30, 1998. It is the desire of Camp Harmony Board of Directors to make a final decision in December of 1998, with the individual to begin employment in the early part of 1999. Inquiries should be directed to: Camp Harmony Inc., P.O. Box 158, Hooversville, PA 15936. Tel: (814)798-5885, Fax: (814)798-2225 or e-ma barmony@twd.net.

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TRAVEL

Brethren Heritage Tour/Passion Play 2000. Re ister now for the July 29–August 11, 2000, Europea tour emphasizing Brethren values and heritage. Fo information contact our tour leaders Don and Hed Durnbaugh (tel/fax (814)658-3222, e-mail: durnbaughd@juniata.edu) or Randall and Peggy Yod (814)643-3221. Brochure with full itinerary and pri will be available by late fall 1998. To ensure space, se $100 per person (made payable to MTS Tours) befo December 31, 1998, to Tour 2000, R.D. 1, Box 312, Hu ingdon, PA 16652.

Oberammergau and Eastern European Tou Urgent! Reserve a place now for a preliminary $1 deposit per person. Travel on August 28, 2000, fro Dulles International Airport to Budapest, then to Vien Prague, Berlin (via Dresden), Nuremburg (via Leipzi Oberammergau, and Munich. Price $3298 per pers for this 14-day tour including hotels, all breakfasts a dinners, and first class tickets to the Passion Play. F more information contact Wayne F. Geisert, Preside Emeritus, Bridgewater College, Box 40, Bridgewat VA 22812. Phone:(540)433-1433 or 828-5494.

Oberammergau Passion Play year 2000. Bohr tours will be leading three tours to Europe and the p sion play during the year 2000. (May, July a September) Prices will begin at $2099.00. For inf mation write to: Wendell and Joan Bohrer, 8520 Ro Meadow Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46217 (317)882-506 Bradley and Bonnie Bobrer, 283 Parkway Drive, Ber OH 44017 or Matthew and Noelle Bohrer, 1860 Jose Court, Elgin, IL (847)697-2746.

Panama Canal Cruise. Cruise the Caribbean, t Panama Canal, and the Pacific Coast of Mexico (Mar 9–March 20, 1999) aboard the Sun Princess at a b gain price. For a brochure and details, contact Way F. Geisert, President Emeritus, Bridgewater Colleg Bridgewater, VA 22812. Phone (540)433-1433 or 82 5494.

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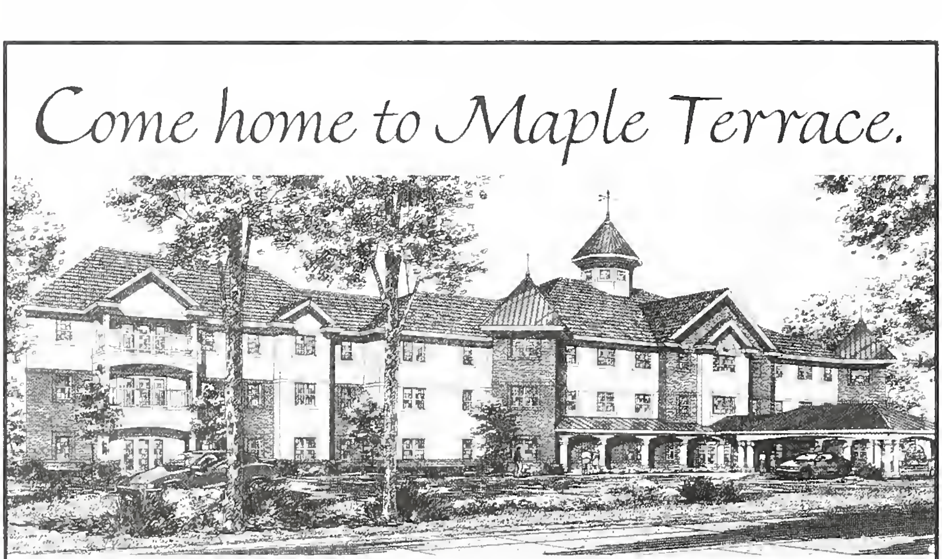

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Turning Points

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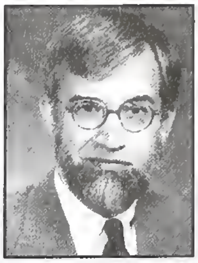
eacon Heights, Fort Wayne, Ind.: Laura Albright, Meredith Ball, Jonathan Degitz, Samantha Dick, Daniel Eikenberry, Margaret Norton, Rolland Norton, Tamara Ricketts, Jeremy Wright, Charlie Wysong
ridgewater, Va.: Brent and Karen Flora Holl
hambersburg, Pa.: Marlana Barnhart, Amanda Christman, Adam Fitz, Bryson Hennelberger, Douglas Mangum, Alisha Miller, Michael Runyon, Alan Lehman
over, Del.: Doris Miller, Shelby Imler, Christine Petro
upont, Ohio: William Martin, Martha Martin, Zane Price, Crystal Price, Jerry Westrick, Diane Westrick
ast Chippewa, Orrville, Ohio: Paul Horst, Kyle Hutson, Vindy Widmer, Jonathan Horst
lm Street, Lima, Ohio: Deborah Guyer, Betty Kesler, Robert Monfort, Linda Monfort, Jessica Rumer
nglish River, South English, Iowa: Jerry and Ruth Powell
ree Spring, Mifflintown, Pa.:Tammy Davis, Alyson Zeigler, Daniel Zeigler, William Clugh, Barbara Shepler, Mark Zeigler, Becky Zeigler
ollins Road, Roanoke, Va.: Lewis and Rose Blankenship, Bill and Carol Bryant, Greg Frazier, JoAnn J. Robertson, Matthew McKimmy
ennersville, West Grove, Pa.: John Lawler, Donna Verba
a Place, Ill.: Garrett Jones, Matthew Simpson, Charlie Jones
iberty Mills, Ind.: Amy Francis, Malary Michael, Kirk Pyle
cPherson, Kan.: Isaac Dill, Debbie Furgason, Marc Hess
aitland, Lewistown, Pa.: Buffie Limes, Kevin Hartman, Alexis Mauery, Kenneth McMullen, Angela Soccio, Roxanne Wilson
aple Spring, Eglon, W.Va.: Sharon Shaffer
emorial, Martinsburg, Pa.: Carrie Shatzer, Josh Isenberg, Danielle Greenleaf, Lani Fisher, Stephanie Gray
idland, Va.: Robert Joseph Crawford, Jr., Michael Thomas Ryan, Dorothy J. Brown, Charles W. Miller
ount Hermon, Bassett, Va.: Rosie Ellis, Andy Edwards
leasant Dale, Decatur, Ind.: Terri Bertoch, Heath Gibson, Nicole Votaw
oplar Ridge, Defiance, Ohio: Doug Griffin, Brett Bostelman
eading, Homeworth, Ohio: Howard Bandy, Melinda Stevens, Olen and Helen Boyer, Mark Lallemand
kyridge, Kalamazoo, Mich.: Nancy DeBliek, Cathy Metzler, Chuck Miller, Carolyn Oberman, Karen Tomlonson
tone, Huntingdon, Pa.: Fred Brechbiel, Andrew Wenger, Sarah Dowdy, Tara McMinn, Doug Wingate, Margaret Smith, Ryder Pingry, Joan Engle
tonerstown, Saxton, Pa.: Jonathan Martin, George Darr, Edward Darr
Thurmont, Md.: Tracey Eureka, Joe Leach, Tom Cregger
Union Center, Nappanee, Ind.: Grace Mishler, Owen and Darlene Sommers, Vicki Stevens, Todd A. and Beth Hahn, Jim Hess, Brady Shively, Cristina Detwiler, Mike Neff, Scott Hepler
West Charleston, Tipp City, Ohio: Abigail Miller, Katie Haman
Worthington, Reading, Minn.: Lance Lyle Nelson, Stacy Lynn Van Westen, Becky Sue Van Westen, Brandon Lee Van Westen

Wedding Anniversaries

Anderson, Roy and Ernestine, Bassett, Va., 50
Beery, Bob and Irene, N. Manchester, Ind., 60
Berkey, Harold and Helen, Goshen Ind., 60
Boone, Robert and Mary, Greenville, Ohio, 50
Brush, Robert and Betty, Johnstown, Pa., 50
Detrick, Elizabeth and Ernest, N. Manchester, Ind., 60
Dick, Sheldon and Alma, St. Michael, Pa., 50
Eash, Ora K. and Luella, Middlebury, Ind., 55
Flora, Sam and Lillie Ann, Harrisonburg, Va., 50
Harr, Harry and Edna, Windber, Pa., 60
Hixson, Foster and Frances, Everett, Pa., 70
Holt, William and Beulah, Bedford, Va., 60
Kagarise, Blaire and Pauline, Huntingdon, Pa., 55
Keith, Walt and Josie, Friendswood, Tex., 50
Lichty, Quinter and Alice, Waterloo, Iowa, 50
Loucks, Otis and Helen, Goshen, Ind., 60
Merricks, Wayne and Merlene, Roanoke, Va., 50
Orr, Maurice and Freda, Glenford, Ohio, 50
Roles, Wayne and Shirley, Decatur, Ill., 50
Rosenberger, Clarence and Ida Rae, Greenville, Ohio, 60
Rowland, Earl and Ferne, Bridgewater, Va., 50
Shilling, Merle and Levon, Johnstown, Pa., 50
Stevens, Ezra and Elizabeth, Moneta Va., 50
Teets, David and Wilma Mae, Eglon, W.Va., 50
Thomas, Clyde and Violet, Johnstown, Pa., 60
Yoder, Ida and George, Berlin, Pa., 50
Zigler, Carl and Madaline, Bridgewater, Va., 55

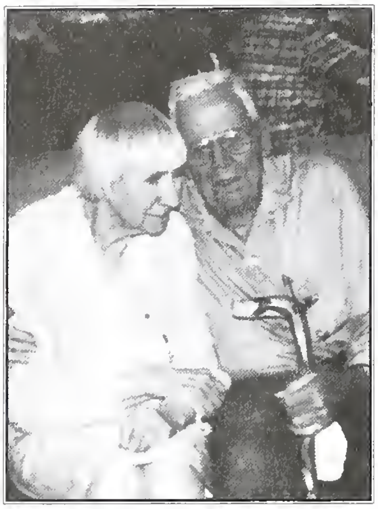
Deaths

Adolph, Blanche, 94, Worthington, Minn., Dec. 20
Amos, Ruth, 87, Altoona, Pa., April 16
Atkins, Jerry Edward, 48, Boones Mill, Va., May 9
Baker, Lulu, 93, Dixon, Ill., Aug. 23
Baker, Ruth, 83, Greenville, Ohio, April 18
Bardell, Fay, 71, Millertown, Pa., May 8
Beard, Chanel, Chambersburg, Pa., Aug. 17
Black, Thornton O., 77, New Oxford, Pa., Aug. 3
Bowers, Neil, 75, Dixon, Ill., Aug. 21
Brechbiel, Fred, 57, Huntingdon, Pa., Aug. 4, 1997
Brillhart, Thelma Huffman, 94, Roanoke, Va., July 13
Brunk, Reatha, 91, Modesto, Calif., Aug. 5
Campanella, Francis, 73, Windber, Pa., July 19
Carpenter, Lucillė H., 88, Brightwood, Va., June 6
Chronister, Velma E., 82, York, Pa., Jan. 11
Custer, Ruth, 92, Defiance, Ohio, March 16
Dascomb, Ray, 86, Linthicum, Md., Aug. 21
Davidson, Eva Barnhart, 51, New Carlisle, Ohio, Aug. 7
Denlinger, Audra L., 75, New Carlisle, Ohio, June 8
Dilling, Nellie S., 89, Roaring Spring, Pa., March 22
Dollar, Helen, 85, Altoona, Pa., March 2
Eshelman, Carolyn, Johnstown, Pa., Nov. 5
Eshelman, Dave, 60, Goshen, Ind., July 6
Evans, Rhoda, 71, Martinsburg, Pa., Jan. 20
Fair, Miriam, 92, Huntingdon, Pa., May 16
Faust, Phyllis, 68, Chambersburg, Pa., July 18
Flory, Walter S., Jr., Winston-Salem, N.C., June 8
Frye, Benjamin Sr., 74, Hollidaysburg, Pa., Oct. 11
Glover, Russell, 75, Uniontown, Pa., Aug. 9
Godfrey, Kenneth C. Sr., 77, Dallastown, Pa., July 30
Gray, Carol, 69, Richmond, Va., July 6
Green, C. Ray, 70, Thurmont, Md., July 21
Grimm, James M., 97, New Carlisle, Ohio, April 12
Grund, Meral, 88, Kent, Ohio, July 1
Harm, Paul F., Sr., 88, Harrisburg, Pa., May 4
Helser, Berdine, 91, Thornville, Ohio, July 21
Higgins, Milton H., 82, Roaring Spring, Pa., May 23
Hodgden, Delouris Williford, 77, Kansas City, Mo., June 26
Hodgden, Frances L., 78, Kansas City, Mo., June 3
Hollinger, Esther P., 95, New Oxford, Pa., May 3
Howes, Pauline, 85, Kaleva, Mich., May 27
Hurst, Wilmer R., 67, Harrisonburg, Va., May 24
Hutzler, Sarah Juanita, 77, Martinsburg, W. Va., June 28
Kauffman, Samuel A., 69, Middlebury, Ind., July 18
Kennedy, Hazel, 88, La Verne, Calif., July 15
Lawson, Charles B., 82, Harrisonburg, Va., May 9
Leeklider, Ethel, 95, Arcanum, Ohio, Aug. 17
Lemert, Helen Marie, 78, N. Liberty, Ind., July 1
Long, Erna, 84, Ypsilanti, Minn., Dec. 24
Luing, Buell, 61, Worthington, Minn., April 26
Majka, Pauline, 73, Uniontown, Pa., July 16
Marsaa, Ben B., 85, Cando, N.D., Aug. 14
McCubbage, Anna, 91, Culpeper, Va., May 15
McLeary, June, Johnstown, Pa., March 16
Michael, Kenneth E., 97, Goshen, Ind., July 19
Miller, Bryan J., 33, Red Lion, Pa., Aug. 21
Miller, Homer, Johnstown, Pa., Oct. 19, 1997
Neff, Sandra S., 56, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 10
Nelson, Loretta, 59, Chambersburg, Pa., Aug. 20
Nispel, William C., Jr., 87, York, Pa., Aug. 5
Noble, Hazel, 90, Dixon, Ill., Aug. 19
Nolen, Alfred C., 81, Bassett, Va., Feb. 3
Oltman, Lois Wine, 93, Enders, Neb., May 18
Ott, Fred, 85, Windber, Pa., June 15
Page, Helen A., 81, Kingsley, Iowa, May 12
Painter, Shelva Sarver, 60, Roanoke, Va., Jan. 21
Ressler, Susie, 79, Lancaster, Pa., July 3
Rhoades, Sylvan R., 95, Arcanum, Ohio, June 28
Rhodes, Dorothy T., 93, Altoona, Pa., Sept. 20
Roberts, Lillian M., 97, Roanoke, Va., April 11
Rorabaugh, Ai, Jr., 78, New Providence, Pa., July 22
Royer, Mary, 89, Arcanum, Ohio, March 25
Saylor, Glenn W., 86, Waterloo, Iowa, June 28
Schlapkohl, 94, Worthington, Minn., June 5
Shank, Wilbur R., 86, Martinsburg, Pa., June 11
Shenk, Sara, 98, Carlisle, Pa., Dec. 29
Singer, Edna, 87, Tyrone, Pa., April 29
Slaybaugh, Bernice E., 76, New Oxford, Pa., July 26
Smith, Ruth, 87, Greenville, Ohio, Aug. 7
Stager, Hollie, 82, Arcanum, Ohio, Nov. 20
Staup, Josephine, M., 88, New Carlisle, Ohio, June 24
Steigleman, Hazel, 80, Carlisle, Pa., Nov. 22
Stebbings, Tim, 37, Modesto, Calif., May 21
Stocker, Gerald, 64, Martinsburg, W.Va., April 16
Stover, Harry L., 75, Dayton, Va., Aug. 16
Terry, Helen, 63, Fayetteville, W.Va., July 12
Thiel, Frank, Johnstown, Pa., March 9
Traxler, Betty, 72, La Place, Ill., May 11
Volland, Donald W., 70, Lebanon County, Pa., Aug. 23
Weigle, George, 73, Dixon, Ill., Aug. 14
Weik, Mary, 80, Palmyra, Pa., Aug. 4
Weimer, Brian P., 29, Richmond, Ind., June 17
Weiss, Howard B., 79, Myerstown, Pa., June 15
Welborn, Vivian, 83, N. Manchester, Ind., Aug. 7
Wells, William, Texas, May 19
Werner, Alice V., 83, Lineboro, Md., Aug. 19
Weygandt, Earl, Walnut Creek, Calif., May 26
White, Laura Louise, 85, N. Liberty, Ind., May 24
Wilt, Mildred Charity, 94, Eglon, W.Va., June 4
Wine, Dallas G., 96, Imperial, Neb., May 12
Wine, Goldie, 89, Lakeland, Fla., July 18
Witham, Nondus, 89, Lima, Ohio, May 30
Wolfe, Ethel B., 86, Martinsburg, Pa., March 5



Editorial

Peace. Be still.



His wife of more than 60 years was in the nursing home with Alzheimer's when Earl Traughber stopped by his daughter's for lunch. Ruth was reading from a book of Bible stories to her little boy Matt in preparation for his nap. The story Matt had chosen that day was of Jesus calming the storm. When she finished the story, Earl and his daughter looked at each other. "You know," the old man said, "I believe that story is as much about life's storms as about nature's storms."

He had grown up poor and gone to work at age 14 to help support his mother. Earl Traughber has been letting Jesus calm his storms ever since. He was married at age 23, but a year later, in January, his wife and their new baby both died after complications of childbirth. A year after that, on January 29, 1927, he married Beulah, and the following January, Earl Jr. was born. "Lucky January" is a poem Ruth wrote from her mother's perspective. It reads in part:

> "Your daddy was so proud.
> "He said, maybe January/Was his lucky
> month after all./ He'd had two in a row.
> "Then it occurred to me, /He must have
> worried/That it wouldn't be so.
> "That he would lose/Junior and me/Just as
> had happened before.
> "He carried all that fear alone/And he
> never/Breathed a word."

The babies kept coming—first Earl Jr., then Iva, Dorthea, Bill, Harold, Bob, and Ruth. Earl and Beulah would take them all to Sunday school and church every Sunday at the Decatur (Ill.) Church of the Brethren. After church he would count them to make sure they were all there before they went home. To support a large family he worked many years at two jobs for little money. He would put in eight hours a day at the local corn processing plant, then a half day at carpenter work.

He always said love with his hands, whether it was a spanking for the kids or handling a hammer and saw or paint brush to help out. He'd build on a room for a family member, or wire a house, or put on a new roof for someone down the road. When they'd try to pay he'd say he didn't need to be paid, "But you just pass it on and help the next person who needs it."

Once twelve-year-old Bob was with Earl when he went to downtown Decatur to pay bills on payday. They went first to the Goodyear store to pay a bill, then walked from Goodyear to Sears. When Earl took out his wallet he noticed he had too much money. So they walked back to Goodyear and he told them they'd given him too much change.

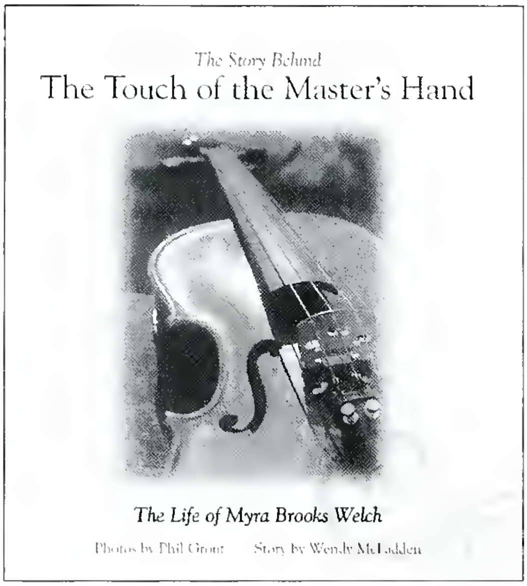
The Church of the Brethren pastor talked to Earl Jr. abou the possibility of going into the ministry, but he joined the Navy instead. Then his father fell off the roof of a house he was working on and broke his back. Because of his father's condition, the son got out of the Navy and by that time had decided to go into the ministry after all. He told his father he was glad to be out so he could follow God's call, but he was sorry it took a fall from the house to get him out of the Navy. "I'd do it again if that was what it took," Earl told his son, who went on to serve many years as a Church of the Brethren pastor in Idaho, as General Board member, and now Standing Committee member.

It hadn't been long after their 50th anniversary that Beulah had started failing. With help from his family, Earl took care of her at home for seven years. He bathed and dressed her, and took her to church on Sunday. Eventually the family decided that for his sake she would go to live at the Church of the Brethren nursing home at Girard, Ill., two hours from Decatur. Earl drove those two hours every day at first, then cut back to two or three days a week. She would make only a whimpering sound, but she seemed to relax more when he was there. When he was 88 and could make the drive no longer, they moved Beulah to a Decatur nursing home, where it would be easier for her devoted husband to visit.

As the arthritis kept getting worse in his once-broken back, the nurses noticed he was having a hard time of it. Why don't you come and live here? they would say. He did, and every day he would go visit Beulah and feed her. The man who shared Earl's room was an Alzheimer's patient who was always getting into Earl's things. Earl's daughter, Dorthea Wood, had an idea. "If you're going to live with an Alzheimer's patient," she said to him, "why don't you live with Mom? At least she's not going to get into your stuff."

After many years apart, Earl and Beulah became roommates again. But he wasn't sure if that was the right thing to do until one day he said to his daughter, "Ask Mom if she likes rooming in here with me." So she did. "Mom, do you like being in here with Dad?" Beulah didn't hesitate but said an unmistakable "mmm-hmm." They were convinced that she had understood the question. After that he was at peace with the arrangement.

Beulah Traughber died in 1996. On June 18 this year, Earl, at age 95, passed from this life to the next. The last storm had been calmed. —Fletcher Farrar



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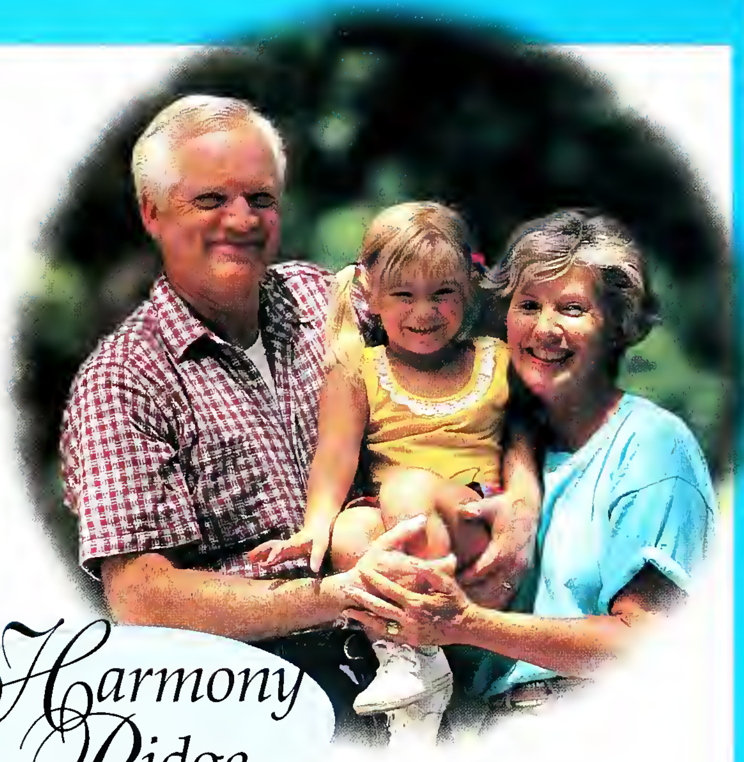

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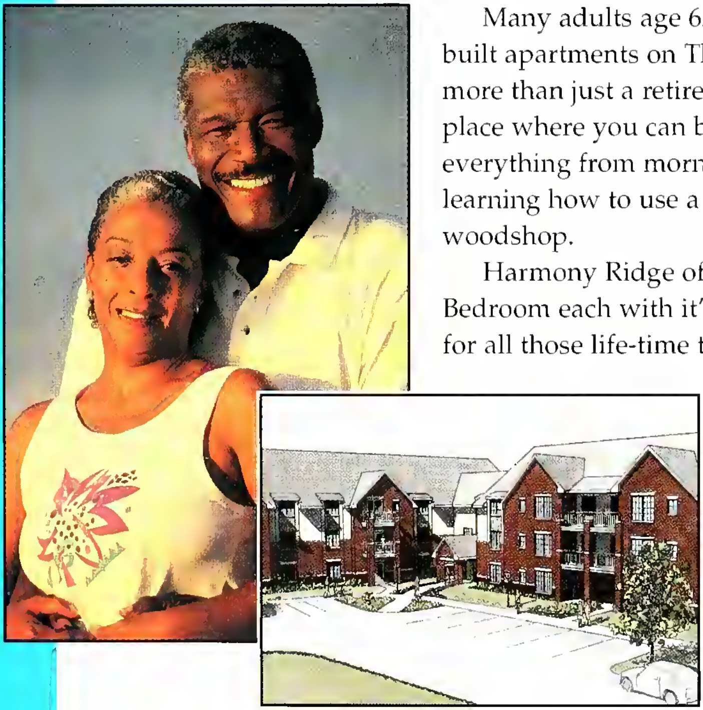

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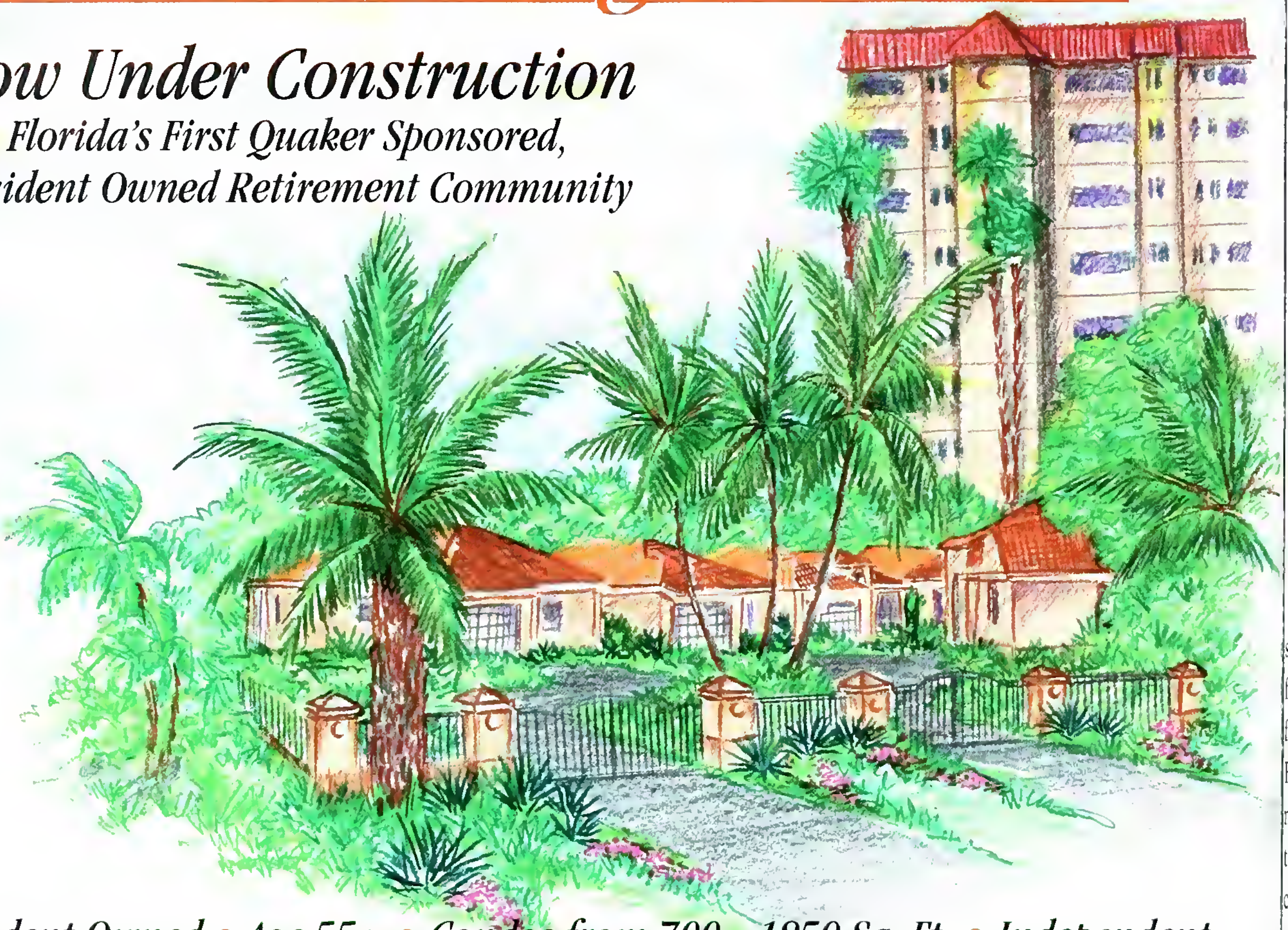

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Messenger

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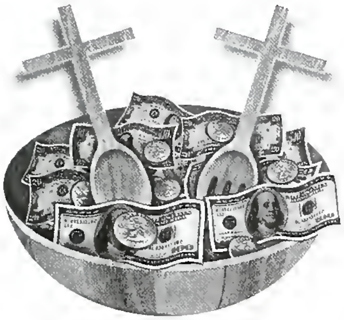
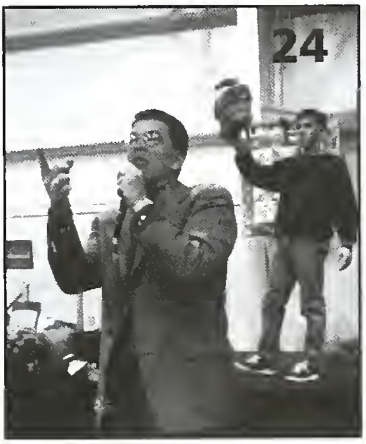


On the cover: All churches share the need to "gather greens," so why not share artwork too? As we were preparing this month's cover story on the General Board's Funding office, we came across our sister publication, *Presbyterians Today*, with a cover story on a similar topic. We decided to ask permis-ion to use their salad bowl artwork. A call to Louisville, Ky. ound editor Eva G. Stimson eager to help. She directed us to reelance graphic artist Ben Fishman in San Francisco, who nakes a living creating illustra-ions with the help of his computer. He was pleased to arrange for MESSENGER to use his art. After seeing MESSENGER for he first time, Fishman wrote to us, "It's good to see that there are communities of caring and worship out there."



John Minicha

Features

11 Gathering greens
Here's a behind-the-scenes look at the General Board's Funding office, a small staff with a big job. Its dual responsibility is to remind congregations and individuals that ministries of the larger church need resources to thrive, and to remind Christians that as stewards they need to give in order to thrive.

15 Brethren dig in in the Dominican
Work begun by Puerto Rico Brethren has brought about a community of 16 Brethren congregations in the Dominican Republic. Former moderator Earl Ziegler traveled there in August to join in celebrating baptisms and a new church building.

20 Stories of lives changed by BVS
An October gathering in New Windsor, Md., continued the 50th anniversary celebration of Brethren Volunteer Service. Journalist Walt Wiltschek, now youth pastor at Westminster, Md., gathered stories of former BVSers, describing how they were changed forever by volunteering.

22 Beyond anti-litter campaigns
When we view the earth as God's creation, and understand that "dominion" implies deeply caring, we go beyond superficial environmentalism to a loving relationship with the planet.

24 Granddaddy relief auction
Wayne Zunkel reports that when Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvnia districts get together for their annual relief auction, it is not only a hugely successful fundraiser, but also a witness of caring for the hurting peoples of the world.

26 Zelophehad's five feisty daughters
If you don't know your Numbers, study the Bible with Brethren pastor Christy Waltersdorff, for a challenging story of women in ministry.

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29 Opinions
31 Turning Points
32 Editorial

From the Publisher

I know next to nothing about sports, having grown up in a family where sports basically didn't exist. What little I know now has rubbed off from my husband and son, both of whom will watch just about anything on TV that involves a ball or fast wheels.

Despite my ignorance, I pricked up my ears recently when some sports imagery was applied to me. It was a few weeks ago when I was the guest preacher at the Hagerstown (Md.) Church of the Brethren. I was introduced by the Brethren Buddies, a winsome puppet troupe. In the skit that served as the children's story, the puppets were trying to figure out who I was. As part of his explanation, the Sunday school teacher puppet compared the church to a baseball team (the Orioles, in this case) and the General Board's Leadership Team to the coaches.

As someone who typically was chosen third from last when the softball teams were being set up, I'm not exactly used to being called anything athletic, much less a coach. But I tried on the idea and liked it. After all, a good coach helps the players reach their full potential and guides the group into working together as a team to reach a common goal. That's a pretty good description of what the General Board is trying to do. In fact, it sounds like a good description of pastors and everyone else serving in church leadership.

I know that I have been on the receiving end of the coaching, as well. This past summer when I faced a financial problem in Brethren Press, I felt tangible support from my colleagues on the Leadership Team. It wasn't just sympathy; it was a sense that they were shouldering the problem as all of ours, not just mine. I was grateful to see teamwork in action.

I wasn't sure the sports analogy could be taken any further, since—unlike the Orioles—we're not trying to beat everyone else. But then I thought of the Special Olympics, where every participant is cheered wildly simply for doing his or her best. There's a story where one runner in the Special Olympics trips and falls before reaching the finish line. The others in the race stop and return to help their fallen comrade across the finish line together. That's the kind of coaching we can all do for each other.

In this season of thanksgiving, I'm thankful for the creativity of people who present ideas in fresh ways, for teammates who work with perseverance and grace, for the cloud of witnesses that cheers us on, and for the Coach who sets before us the common goal. That God entrusts us with this work should humble and inspire us all.

Wendy McFadden

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'Good Morning, America! Peace!'

A Fort Wayne, Ind., TV production team videotapes a greeting for ABC's "Good Morning America" with a group of Manchester College peace studies students. The students' greeting, tentatively scheduled for broadcast in late October, promotes the 50th anniversary of the peace studies program, the nation's first. The college marked the anniversary with a series of events in October [see article page 8]. The program provides studies in the understanding of war and peace, social change, and conflict resolution.

Mission trip to LA and Tijuana changes lives

Thirteen people representing 10 different churches, from Indiana, Virginia, Ohio, and Florida, came together in Los Angeles for a mission encounter in August. Under the leadership of Terry Shumaker, pastor of Pleasant Dale Church of the Brethren, Decatur, Ind., and his wife, Carolyn, the group stayed at Bella Vista Church of the Brethren in East Los Angeles.

The group worked and witnessed in the Bella Vista church and adjoining Bittersweet Ministries, a rehabilitation home for men.

A food distributing trip to skid row made a lasting impression. "Skid row brought to reality how close I was to being homeless myself," said Kathy Simmons of the Good News Fellowship church in Covington, Va. "It wrecked me emotionally, but it made me sincerely thankful for all of God's blessings."

Shumaker and Gilbert Romero, pastor of the Bella Vista congregation, took the group to Tijuana, Mexico, where they worked at an agency which provides assistance for orphans and others in poverty. They also helped distribute food to those who live in the Tijuana landfill.

"For me the trip was life altering," said Rita Lippold, of Mexico (Ind.) Church of the Brethren. "The whole reason I came was made clear to me by a gentleman, addicted to crack, living on skid row. I had asked him if my being there helped. He looked at me and said no. But as I turned to leave he said, 'I may not have helped you, and you may not have helped me, but we both were lifted up.'"

Correction

An article in the October MESSENGER stated incorrectly that Hillcrest School is government-operated. Actually, Hillcrest, located in Jos, Nigeria, is run by a consortium of missions and churches, with the Nigerian church (EYN)/Church of the Brethren USA being one of these partner mission churches. A representative of EYN holds a seat on the board of directors of the school.

Remembered

J. Oliver Dearing, of New Lebanon, Ohio, died Aug. 5 at age 89. He had served as pastor of Kaskaskia and Walnut Grove congregations in Illinois, County Line and Eversole churches in Ohio, and Spring Creek, Pleasant Dale, and Cedar Grove churches in Indiana. He and his wife, Ellen, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary March 31 this year.

Thornton O. Black, 77, died Aug. 3 at The Brethren Home, New Oxford, Pa. He was ordained in 1957 at Sam's Creek Church of the Brethren near New Windsor, Md. He served at churches in Maryland and Pennsylvania and until 1994 was on the pastoral staff at The Brethren Home.

Karl P. Flora, of Centreville, Va., died Aug. 31 at age 49. A member of Manassas (Va.) Church of the Brethren, Flora was an internationally recognized authority in the pharmaceutical chemistry of anti-cancer drugs. He had been diagnosed with the disease of non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

A day for peacemakers

Studying the Beatitudes each one month at a time under the direction of pastor Larry Fourman, Crest Manor Church of the Brethren, South Bend, Ind., devoted September to "Blessed are the peacemakers." On Sunday, Sept. 20, the sermon and music were on the theme of peace, and the congregation dedicated two new peace poles. Members were invited to sign the Pledge Against Violence. Youth and their families heard a presentation about the Brethren peace stance by Ministry Summer Service intern Joshua

...LSC... ...URCH ...THE ...HREN

Centennial celebrants *at the Coulson Church of the Brethren included Rita Creed, Ruth Harmon, Barbara Riccio, Faye Bryant, Alma Mabe, and Becky Bryant.*

All but the pig enjoy centennial

Coulson Church of the Brethren, in Hillsville, Va., celebrated its 100th anniversary July 22-26. Activities included a "pig pickin'" attended by more than 250 people. The church was organized and called Coulson on Nov. 22, 1898. It moved into a new building in 1952, and the old building was sold and moved. The church now has more than 300 members. —BECKY BRYANT

Brockway. The day concluded with a presentation of Lee Krähenbühl's play, *The Final Journey of John Kline*, performed by Elkhart Valley Church of the Brethren. —Harriet Hamer Cassell

Ten former pastors attend homecoming

Ten former pastors and numerous former members were honored guests at the Sept. 20 homecoming at Lancaster (Pa.) Church of the Brethren. Attendance for the three worship services totaled 662.

On Oct. 4, the Lancaster congregation celebrated the 50th anniversary of Brethren Volunteer Service, featuring interviews of 10 former BVSers about their experiences, and music by an octet of former BVSers.

Flood can't stop Lone Star pancake supper

A red quilt, very damp and soiled, greeted members of the Lone Star Church of the Brethren's cleanup crew Monday, Oct. 5, after a deluge of 5.09 inches on Sunday sent the waters of nearby Washington Creek swirling through the basement of the church near Lawrence, Kan.

The queen-size quilt, made by member Cathy Miles, was scheduled to be the "prize" for donors attending the church's 49th Annual Pancake Supper on Oct. 19. Water was higher than the piano keys, topped the kitchen work counters, and left banquet tables tipped atop one another in the church basement.

Church members went to work. "We worked two full, hard days with power equipment to clean the basement up," said Earl Flory. The carpet had to be removed and everything disinfected and scrubbed, with fans set in place to help dry things out. Dean Neider used a power washer on all the folding tables and chairs. Pots and pans, cups and dishes, silverware and linens went home with various members for disinfecting and washing.

Caroline Flory took the quilt home, washed it twice, and it finally came clean. On Monday, a week before the Pancake Supper, carpet layers finished installing the new carpet, the kitchen was put back in order,and the quilt, enriched with history, was rehung. And the 49th Annual Pancake Supper posters stayed up. —Irene Shull Reynolds

Glen Shively

Heifer Project *work honored: Charlene Clark, district conference moderator; James E. Tomlonson, district executive minister; Steve Bohn, district witness chair; and David Boothby, Midwest director of HPI from Goshen, Ind.*

Southern Ohio Heifer Project committee honored

For 55 years, a Southern Ohio committee of nine has promoted Heifer project and shipped animals to families in the US and around the world. The Church of the Brethren 250th anniversary in 1958 was the occasion to send 54 heifers to Germany.

Heifer Project International no longer ships animals overseas but purchases them locally in each country from high-quality herds and donates them to families in need. Because animals are no longer handled by the Southern Ohio Heifer Project committee, that group is going out of existence. Donations are now being directed to the district office and sent to the Midwest Regional Office of HPI.

As part of the 1998 District Conference, the committee and district were honored for their past work by David Boothby, director of the Midwest Office of HPI. Hopes were expressed that, under the new arrangement, more families than ever will be lifted out of poverty. —Ralph Dull

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," Messenger, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.

News

Butler Chapel choir goes to Indiana to 'tear down walls'

"Tearing down walls and building up bridges!" was the idea behind a unique reunion that was held in late August between members of Butler Chapel AME Church of Orangeburg, S.C., and two Northern Indiana Church of the Brethren congregations.

This reunion was in honor of the friendships that were forged between Butler Chapel and Church of the Brethren members last year as Brethren assisted in the rebuilding of the Butler Chapel church, which had been destroyed in March 1996 due to race-related arson.

Susan Boyer, pastor of the Manchester congregation, became acquainted with Butler Chapel last year when she led 30 members to South Carolina for nine days of rebuilding. One of her church members, Torin Eikenberry, was assigned as on-site coordinator of the project as his Brethren Volunteer Service assignment with Emergency Response/Service Ministries. And another church member, Cliff Kindy, served as Disaster Response project director for one month.

When the Manchester church burned in January, Mellerson and other Butler Chapel members called Boyer and prayed with her. The first Sunday that Manchester was without a building due to its fire was the same Sunday that the new Butler Chapel building was dedicated. Eikenberry and two other members of the Manchester church attended the dedication and returned home with a $3,000 donation that was raised during the dedication service. Eight months later it was the members of the Butler Chapel and Prodigal AME churches who came to the aid of the Manchester church by "tearing down walls" in the form of a community concert to help raise money for the Manchester rebuilding project.

Nine members of the Bremen (Ind.) Church of the Brethren also worked on the Butler Chapel project last year. "We really had nothing in common except our Christian heritage," said Bremen pastor Tom Hostetler. Scott Graybill, Keith Kline, and Daniel Kline joined Hostetler on the project and were all impressed with the way Butler Chapel members worked through their losses.

"We were glad to be part of something on a denominational level," said Hostetler, who was impressed by the way people of diverse backgrounds worked and worshiped together. So impressed, in fact, that he invited Mellerson and Butler Chapel members to visit Bremen for a joint worship service.

During the Aug. 30 morning worship at the Bremen church, Mellerson "built bridges" by saying that those in attendance would be "good Brethren/AME's today!" He

Regina Bryan

Playing in a sandbox *unites children from Bremen, Ind., with their visitors from Orangeburg, S.C.*

opened his sermon by saying, "We are grateful that God allowed our paths to cross that we might fellowship. We are so close-knit that they can't get rid of us and we can't get rid of them. They keep giving to us and we keep giving to them and that's what God intended — for us to work together that way."

Mellerson continued by joking that God made each of us from dirt. "Our dirt was just a little darker than most of yours." He added, "We must not be one denomination under God, not one race under God, but one nation under God. We've got to tear down walls and build up bridges of peace, oy, faith, and love!"

Butler Chapel members said they were a bit confused when the Brethren who came to help them rebuild said that they received more than they gave. "We were a tad bit jealous and wanted to see what it felt like to get more from giving," Mellerson said. So now Butler Chapel members are helping other churches in their area that were burned. —Regina Bryan

Regina Bryan is a member of Pleasant Dale Church of the Brethren, Decatur, Ind.

Brethren respond in Puerto Rico and around the world

In response to the devastation of Hurricane Georges, Glenn Kinsel, a retired volunteer for the Church of the Brethren General Board's Emergency Response/Service Ministries, traveled to Puerto Rico as soon as the storm had left the island. He has been working with Juan Figueroa, pastor of Segundo Iglesia Cristo Misionera Fellowship, near San Juan.

Kinsel reported that over 300 people lost their lives and 33,113 single-family houses were destroyed, 85,000 are without roofs, and 27,066 others have major damage. Total damage is estimated at $2 billion.

According to Kinsel, an estimated 200,000 families are expected to apply for assistance. Kinsel is expected to visit Castañer, which also was heavily damaged. The Brethren have been present in Castañer for years, and ER/SM expects to begin disaster relief projects there in the near future.

Meanwhile, reports from the Dominican Republic, another country with Church of the Brethren presence, state that the damage is even more far-reaching, including in an area where there are 13 Church of the Brethren congregations. According to Jorge Rivera, associate executive of Atlantic Southeast District, the situation is "exceedingly serious."

ER/SM is creating a list of people who are willing to volunteer in reconstruction efforts. For more information, contact ER/SM at 800-451-4407.

An allocation of $20,000 was made Aug. 25 from the Church of the Brethren General Board's Emergency Disaster Fund to support an appeal to respond to China's worst flooding in 50 years. Over 2,000 people have died and tens of thousands are injured. According to the release, starvation and disease are threatening many who had to leave their homes. These funds will be channeled to Action by Churches Together, via Church World Service.

Six grants totaling $62,500 were allocated from the Emergency Disaster Fund to assist in a variety of projects. Nearly half of those funds, $30,000, were allocated in response to a CWS appeal to assist Action by Churches Together International in emergency humanitarian work in Indonesia. According to Miller Davis, manager of the Church of the Brethren Emergency Response/Service Ministries, "a grave economic and political crisis, drought, forest fires, and ethnic strife have all combined to cause enormous difficulties in Indonesia during the last year."

Davis said it is estimated that 50 million people will have difficulty maintaining a minimal level of food intake in the upcoming months, with 40 percent of the country's population expected to be below the poverty line by year's end. This Church of the Brethren grant will be used for one-time distribution of seeds and tools and for food-for-work projects.

Other grants include—

- $11,000 in response to the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. This grant will be distributed through CWS and cooperating agencies to meet the long-term needs of survivors and their families; medical services to survivors, letters of support and concern, books of sermons from pastors in Oklahoma City who faced a similar experience following the bombing there in 1995, and an endowment to provide school fees to selected children whose families have been affected.
- $10,000 for response work in Texas following Tropical Storm Charley and in North Carolina following Hurricane Bonnie. Flooding in Texas damaged or destroyed 1,500 mobile homes or rental units. In North Carolina, over 1,000 registrations for disaster assistance in the northeastern part of the state have been made.
- $7,500 to assist with the cost of producing and distributing CWS emergency response information on the World Wide Web. This is a one-time expense.
- $2,500 in response to a refugee crisis in Gambia. According to

Davis, recent fighting in Guinea Bissau between pro-government forces and anti-government rebels has resulted in a fresh influx of refugees into Gambia. This grant will be used for emergency food, shelter, and medicines, with longer-term assistance to include farming tools and educational help.

- $1,500 in response to a CWS appeal to provide short-term assistance to families affected by recent heavy rains in the Czech and Slovak republics. Over 50 people were killed and scores were left homeless.
- A grant of $10,000 was allocated from the Church of the Brethren General Board's Global Food Crisis Fund to assist 17 southern coastal communities of Honduras affected by El Niño and a recent drought.
- A $25,000 Global Food Crisis grant was approved to provide assistance to a grassroots project in Guatemala. Brethren Volunteer Service worker Tom Benevento has been working in the production of wood-conserving stoves and water-storing cisterns in several highland communities. This grant will enable additional families to participate in this ministry.

Other ER/SM disaster projects currently underway include —

- North Carolina, where a grant of $6,953 forwarded to the North Carolina Council of Churches will aid flood victims. The majority of the grant, $6,576, was raised by Virlina District congregations.
- Jefferson County, Ala., where 451 houses were destroyed and another 1,000 damaged by tornadoes.
- Winter Garden, Fla., in response to February tornadoes.
- Roan Mountain/Hampton, Tenn., where the Church of the Brethren is now completing its sixth and final house, constructed in the aftermath of severe floods.

Work continues on projects in southeastern Ohio (rebuilding one home and drywalling and other repair work on others); Alabama (rebuilding six houses from the ground up); Florida (three houses still need to be rebuilt); and Texas (a rebuilding project is being prepared for the first of next year).

Manchester celebrates 50 years of peace studies

The 50th anniversary of the nation's first collegiate peace studies program, which was started by Manchester College, North Manchester, Ind., was celebrated in October in conjunction with the college's homecoming.

Established in the fall of 1948 by Gladdys Muir, the Peace Studies Institute and Program in Conflict Resolution provides studies in the understanding of war and peace, social change and conflict resolution.

Over the past five decades, the peace studies program grounded in political science, sociology, psychology, ethics, religion, economics, and history has "defined issues, stimulated debate and dissent, and prepared students for roles of national and international importance," according to Manchester College. "The program has served as a model to more than 200 colleges and universities which have developed peace studies as part of their curriculums."

In celebration of the anniversary, the college will construct a Gladdys Muir Peace Garden, located at the northwest corner of College Avenue and Wayne Street. Designed by Daniel Krall, a 1968 Manchester College graduate and an associate professor of landscape architecture at Cornell University, the garden is intended to give visitors the opportunity for relaxation and contemplation. A small cottage, which stands adjacent to the garden, will be renovated and refurbished as a gathering place in the interest of peace and conflict resolution.

Also in celebration of the anniversary, the college hosted three symposiums, composed of all Manchester College peace studies graduates, an international food festival, a concert, and a keynote address by Oscar Arias, a Nobel peace laureate and former president of Costa Rica.

BRF speakers urge church: Get back to the Bible

"What happened to the use of the Bible in the Church of the Brethren in the 20th century?"

The Brethren Revival Fellowship examined this question at its Sept. 12 annual meeting at the Heidelberg Church of the Brethren, Myerstown, Pa. About 175 people from 30 congregations and 8 states attended the all-day meeting.

Harold Martin of York, Pa., editor of *BRF Witness*, was one of several who spoke on the need to trust the Bible. He contrasted early statements by Brethren, writing between 1720 and 1920, with statements by Brethren since 1940. Through these statements he traced a decline among some Brethren of belief in the "inerrancy" and "infallibility" of the Bible.

Typical of the early writings Martin quoted was the 1890 "preamble" to the *Gospel Messenger* magazine: "The *Gospel Messenger* recognizes the New Testament as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. . . ."

Typical of later attitudes was this 1979 statement written by a district xecutive whom Martin did not ame: "I am not a verbal inspiraionist. I believe the Bible is the roduct of man attempting to disover God. And I believe in the rogressive discovery of God." This tatement had been submitted to an nnual Conference study committee f which Martin was a member.

He said there are few similar statenents from Brethren recently ecause "they're a little more careful ot to put them in print." But he riticized display of a book at the rethren Press bookstore at Annual onference this year. The book, by a on-Brethren theologian, questioned he validity of the virgin birth of esus. "They were stacked high on he table, implying that here are ome books that every theologian an read," Martin said.

Martin said discarding biblical nerrancy "extols the human mind as he arbiter of truth" and "indicates a limate of human superiority."

During its business meeting, the RF approved establishment of a Brethren Mission Fund" to "support ound, evangelical Brethren mission rojects in the US and overseas."

alks begin between OEPA nd two Brethren groups

he On Earth Peace Assembly board, neeting for the first time as an official gency of the Church of the Brethren nnual Conference, on Sept. 19 xamined the areas in which the mision statements of OEPA, Womaen's aucus, and Brethren and Mennonite ouncil for Lesbian and Gay Conerns intersect. Joining this discussion ere Zandra Wagoner of Womaen's aucus and Jim Sauder of BMC.

According to OEPA, the group's oard and staff "will continue to be in onversation with these and other roups that desire to follow in the ways of Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace." The group adds, "The board and staff affirmed that these conversations are in harmony with recommendations of Annual Conference."

The OEPA board also selected its executive committee for the year beginning Oct. 1.

During its meetings, the board approved a 1998-1999 budget of $370,000 and heard plans for Peace Academies for the 1999-2000 school year, 1999 Conflict Resolution Teams, and the 1999 Joya (Journey for Young Adults) Team, which will help OEPA celebrate its 25th anniversary from various parts of the country.

The executive committee includes Dale Brown of Elizabethtown, Pa., chair; Fran Nyce of Westminster, Md., vice chair; Kathy Leininger of Timberville, Pa., secretary; Matt Guynn of Richmond, Ind., treasurer; Eugene Lichty of McPherson, Kan., at-large; Wes Lingenfelter, Altoona, Pa., at-large.

ABC names speakers for Caring Ministries 2000

Leadership for the second biennial Caring Ministries 2000 conference, scheduled for June 1-4 at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, has been announced. This event is intended for caregivers of all kinds (health and caregiving professionals, deacons, counselors and social workers, mediators, pastors and chaplains, Christian educators, and others).

Sponsored by the Association of Brethren Caregivers, the conference will give attendees the opportunity for training with caregiving professionals and lay people, earning continuing education credits, networking with professional and volunteer care providers, and experiencing spiritual renewal and fellowship.

Delivering keynote addresses will be —

- Philip Yancey, editor-at-large of *Christianity Today*.
- Melva Wilson Costen, professor of worship and music of Interdenominational Theological Center.
- Barbara Lundblad, professor of preaching at Union Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y.
- Staccato Powell, deputy general secretary for National Ministries, National Council of Churches.
- Robert Raines, author and pastor of three United Church of Christ congregations and director of Kirkridge Retreat and Study Center.
- John Shea, religious scholar, teacher and author, who serves as senior scholar-in-residence of Advocate Health Care and research professor for the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University, Chicago.
- Phillip Stone, president of Bridgewater (Va.) College.

Registration information will be available in November. For more information, contact ABC at abc@brethren.org or 800-323-8039.

Latin America and Caribbean interim specialists named

Gloria Gochenour and Tom Benevento have begun work as Latin America and Caribbean specialists for the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships office.

Both are serving on an interim and part-time basis. They will facilitate Spanish-language communication with the region, reactivate Brethren Volunteer Service projects, and renew relationships with church partners.

"We are delighted to draw upon the abilities and commitment of these two people to facilitate the important ministries in the region," said Merv Keeney, Global Mission Partnerships director.

Resources and Opportunities

Seminar: Youth are Citizens of the Earth

The 1999 National Youth Christian Citizenship Seminar, "Fragile: Handle with Care," will be April 10-15 in New York City and Washington, D.C. "Humans have done more damage to the planet Earth during the 20th century than all previous centuries combined," reads the brochure. "More species extinct, more forests razed, more water polluted. Will the next century be any better? It's up to us. God expects it, the Earth deserves it, human life requires it. This year's seminar will help youth see how their lifestyles impact the planet and what they can do to restore God's creation." Registration cutoff date is when the first 100 registrations are received or by March 1. For more information, contact Youth/Young Adult Ministry Office at cobyouth_gb@brethren.org or at 800-323-8039.

Is stewardship more than careful spending?

A video that discusses a taboo subject — money — has been released by the Mennonite Board of Missions. "Beyond the News: Money" addresses stewardship issues and the personal background and emotional connections that affect how money is viewed and used. Ten segments (for a total of 55 minutes) cover a variety of questions — •How is thinking about money influenced by society and family? • Is having a lot of material things a sign of God's blessing? • Does stewardship mean careful spending or taking risks? • How can children be taught to understand the difference between desires and needs? "Beyond the News: Money" is ninth in a series of videos that includes topics such as TV violence, the death penalty, firearms violence, homelessness, racism, and sexual abuse. For more information, call 800-999-3534.

Gifts of the Heart aid hurricane cleanup

Church World Service has issued a plea for "Gift of the Heart" cleanup and health kits for people affected by Hurricane Georges. Cleanup kits include one bucket filled with sponges, one wire brush, plastic garbage bags, one scrub brush, rubber gloves, and one can of powder cleanser.

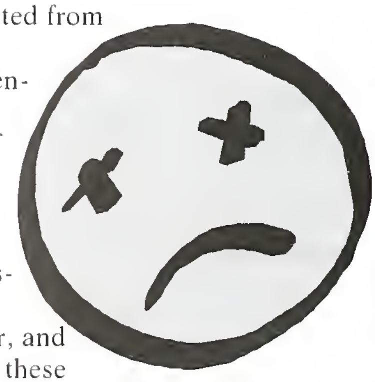
Health kits include one hand towel, one wash cloth, one new bath-size bar of soap, one comb, one toothbrush, one tube of toothpaste, six adhesive bandages, and one nail file. Wrap items in a hand towel and tie together with a ribbon.

These kits are to be sent to the Brethren Service Center in care of CWS, 500 Main Street, New Windsor, MD 21776-0188. According to CWS, a contribution of 50 cents per pound "will help speed the kits to the people who need them."

Bible Institute comes to your home

Five correspondence courses have been prepared by Brethren Bible Institute instructors for Brethren who are unable to attend Brethren Revival Fellowship's annual Brethren Bible Institute. The materials include self-tests and quizzes. Topics offered include "Expository Studies in Colossians" by Harold Martin ($12); "Bible Peace and Nonresistance" by Galen Hackman ($8); "Expositional Study of the Beatitudes" by Galen Hackman ($12); "Major Bible Doctrines (Part I)" by Harold Martin ($12); and "Major Bible Doctrines (Part II)" by Harold Martin ($12). For more information, write to BBI Correspondence School, Route 10 Box 201-N, York, PA 17404.

Learn how 250 million children are exploited



The "Statement on Child Exploitation," adopted by the 1997 Annual Conference, has been published by the Church of the Brethren General Board's Brethren Witnes office. The paper was the result of two years' work by a committee of youth selected from the 1995 Church of the Brethren Christian Citizenship Seminar, where the concern over the issue of child exploitation emerged. The paper provides an overview of the economic and social pressures that create the conditions for child labor, and suggests ways to remedy these conditions, which affect an estimated 250 million of the world's children. The paper is laid out in a nontraditional format and includes photos. A companion study guide is available from the Brethren Witness office; statements ar available from Brethren Press for $1. For more information, contact David Radcliff at dradcliff_gb@brethren.or or 800-323-8039.

Faithful Funding

The Funding office is a ministry because giving is 'transformational'

BY FLETCHER FARRAR

When you work for the Funding office of the General Board, you get used to this kind of kidding. "Here comes Dave," a friend greeted David Huffaker, "I'd better hide my money."

The veteran financial resources counselor was unhesitant. "First of all," he replied, "it isn't your money."

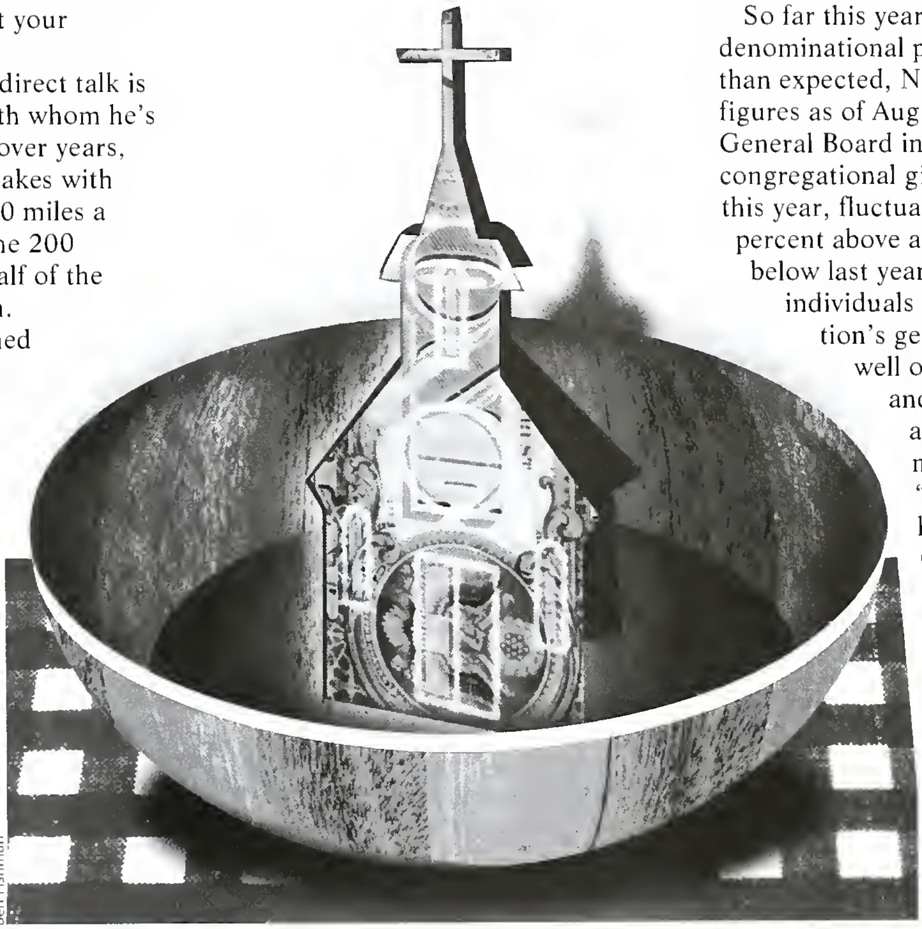
Though that kind of direct talk is reserved for donors with whom he's built up a relationship over years, the message is one he takes with him on all of the 40,000 miles a year he logs and into the 200 homes he visits on behalf of the Church of the Brethren.

"At most of my planned giving seminars in churches I start out by telling people that nobody here owns anything," Huffaker says. "I get some frowns. And then I tell them that everything we have is entrusted to us to be managed for God's glory."

The message is familiar to Christians, if often forgotten. It is the job of the Funding office to find ways to remind us that we are stewards, and to help us find ways to direct the financial resources we control to God's work in the church.

"I'm not a fundraiser," says Huffaker. "And I'm not really a counselor. I am a servant. I work hard to be a servant of all the donors."

Funding office staff members often conduct seminars in churches about wills, planned giving and estate planning, and stewardship. "We hope people and congregations will call on us," says Ken Neher, director of the Funding office of the General Board. "We are working for the good of the whole church."


Ben Fishman

Neher emphasizes that giving is a good thing all around. It is good for those who give, to be able to participate in the ministries of the church. And it is good for the church, because money furthers mission and ministry.

His view that giving is "transformational" makes it easy for Neher to work toward goals for increasing the number of donors and increasing the amounts of gifts. One of his goals is to increase average giving in the Church of the Brethren from the current 2 1/2 percent of total income, to at least 3 percent, a level that hasn't been reached in the last 30 years. "There is plenty of money in Brethren households for all the agencies of the church," Neher says.

So far this year overall giving to denominational programs is better than expected, Neher reports. Using figures as of Aug. 31, Neher told the General Board in October that total congregational giving was "strong" this year, fluctuating between one percent above and one percent below last year's pace. Giving by individuals to the denomination's general fund was up well over last year's level and about 50 percent above budget estimates. And giving to "designated" funds like the Global Food Crisis Fund and the Emergency Disaster Fund was more than doubling last year's pace.

Neher reported that gifts to special campaigns initiated several years ago — "Brethren Vision for the 90s" and "Behold I Make All Things New"— "continue to phase out as expected as pledges are fulfilled." Without the big campaign gifts, overall giving was down about 12 percent below last year's Aug. 31 total, but still the mood is upbeat compared to recent years. "Overall giving and investment income is

(continued on page 14)

Don't let the buck stop here

The director of Funding answers hard questions about giving

MESSENGER gathered up some of the hardest questions we could find that Brethren are asking about money and giving. We asked Ken Neher, director of Funding for the General Board, to provide answers.

Q. *As individuals and congregations struggle to apportion their dollars among multiple agencies—why should I give to the General Board? What sets you apart?*

A. The General Board and its staff still carry out by far the most work and ministry on behalf of the church.

The General Board is the agency with strong established international mission connections and projects, and the agency coordinating volunteerism for the denomination. It is the agency addressing the set-apart ministry shortfall, and the agency coordinating national youth programs. It is the agency that is maintaining a witness in Washington, DC, and challenging us on peace and justice issues in the world. It is the agency that provides global food and disaster relief at the national level for the international community, and the agency that coordinates communication and curriculum development at a denominational level. It is the agency that is asking its staff to consult with congregations and to resource them in order to help empower them where spirit has dwindled or focus has been lost. Administrative costs are a very low five percent of our expense, much more efficient than most organizations doing service and ministry today.

Q. *I can see what impact Habitat for Humanity has on my community, but I can't see where the General Board uses its resources. Where, specifically, does my gift go?*

A. Read Newsline, MESSENGER, direct mail appeals, newsletters, the Church of the Brethren Web page, and other publications to see what your dollars do. It is incredible! Visit The Brethren Service Center in New Windsor to see what your dollars do. Do disaster child care or attend a workcamp to see what your dollars do. Chaperone kids to National Youth Conference to see what your dollars do.

Q. *It seems like many of the resources the denomination supplied me before redesign have been cut off, but I am asked to give more. Why?*

A. As with many things today, costs continue to rise and a dollar will only go so far. Redesign has focused the General Board resources to try to make the most efficient and productive use of your offerings in light of its new mission statement. Many of us still need to be challenged to give out of God's grace for us. Most of us are not yet where God calls us to be in that regard.

Q. *I think my pastor is paid more than me and works fewer hours than I do. I suspect that Elgin staff members are paid even higher salaries. Why should I be asked to give?*

A. I wonder how many of us would want our pastor's job? Comparing jobs and salaries is a dangerous pastime. What is a teacher's job really worth? A plumber's? A daycare worker's? A pastor's?

As for Elgin staff, some were hired not knowing what their pay would be. The director of Funding for another denomination I know makes twice my salary. I didn't answer this calling by the church for the money.

Q. *I like to see my gift at work, so I want to designate where it goes and what it does. Can I?*

A. In short, yes. But, in most cases it must be for work that the General Board is already engaged in. That is the reason behind the updated mission projects booklet, to highlight the various mission projects of the church and to be as straightforward as possible about their costs. This allows you the opportunity to direct your gifts and identify what you are doing in a tangible way. The danger is that if donors do not allow some flexibility in how gifts are used, there is no way to pay for offices or bookkeepers to manage the gifts, or to send you e-mail or newsletters to report on progress or success of the ministry. Lack of flexibility may not allow us to identify a new need for our church and to nurture a solution. These are important considerations for the health of the church, and some are essential for the ministries to continue.

Q. *It seems like I get a lot of printed material from Elgin but they never answer any of my questions or concerns. Why is this?*

A. Perhaps we need a periodical of some kind devoted to answering the hard questions from our members? The financial resource counselors and the Funding staff have always tried very hard to answer everyone's concerns or questions about the church. We are often called upon to answer questions not only about the General Board's activities, but about the other agencies of the church as well. I hope people don't feel the General Board or its staff are ever trying to hide information or mislead. The Leadership Team, Congregational Life Teams, and the Mission and Ministries Planning Council are new animals in the life of the church. If your questions didn't get answered the last time you asked, consider asking again, to give the new team a chance.

Meet the scattered, but focused, staff

Ken Neher and Carol Bowman

Faye Miller

David Huffaker

Ray Glick

Lillian Dako

The six-person staff of the General Board's Funding office is scattered from Virginia to the state of Washington. For financial resource counselors, their second home is the road, which carries them to congregations, conferences, and the homes of donors. Staff members come with varied backgrounds, but have in common their love for people and for the church.

Ken Neher, of Wenatchee, Wash., has been director of Funding and a member of the General Board staff Leadership Team since April 1997. Before that he had served three years as a planned giving officer. Prior to joining the Church of the Brethren staff, he was owner of two Burger King franchises for 12 years. He has served in various leadership positions in his home congregation, Sunnyslope, in Wenatchee.

Carol Bowman, also of Wenatchee and the Sunnyslope congregation, divides her time between two General Board staff positions. She is half-time financial resource counselor and half-time congregational life team member. She comes to her new job without a financial background but with a love of people. Her two jobs blend together well, especially when it comes to work on stewardship and congregational giving. Much of her work involves building relationships through phone calls, letters, and face-to-face meetings. "I listen a lot," she says.

Faye Miller, who holds the title of resource coordinator, works in a rented office in Harrisonburg, Va. Now in her fifth year, she calls herself the "centralized nag" of the Funding office, reminding staff of their commitments and calls, while working to supply them with all the materials and brochures they need to do the job. She claims three "home congregations" —the Bridgewater, Va., church where she grew up, the Montezuma church in Dayton, Va., where she was a member later, and the Harrisonburg congregation, where she now attends.

Ray Glick, full-time financial resource counselor for the eastern US, also works out of the Harrisonburg, Va., office. He is on the road about 100 days a year attending district conferences, visiting district executives, and visiting donors in their homes. "It is so satisfying to help individuals develop a plan of giving that brings them great joy," Glick says.

David Huffaker, is also full-time financial resource counselor, traveling throughout the Midwest from his home in West Milton, Ohio. After 30 years in business for himself, Huffaker is now in his eighth year in this position. He told the Michigan District Conference once that he meets so many good people in his work, "I should pay to do this work rather than receiving pay." In response, someone asked that he make out the check to the Michigan District.

Lillian Dako, is systems coordinator, working out of the General Offices in Elgin, Ill. She calls herself the "numbers person" for the Funding office, generating weekly and monthly reports on giving from congregations and individuals, as well as sending out stewardship resources to congregations. "I'm the contact person in Elgin," she says. "If something in Funding needs to be done here, I'm the one who gets it done."

(continued from page 11)

ahead of budget projections at this time," Neher told the board.

Neher concedes that the absence of a major-gift campaign puts a dent in the totals, and one veteran staffer observed, "I hope we don't get too gun-shy about asking."

But Neher says this isn't the time. "There was a desire by the General Board and staff to not do this type of fundraising again in the near future," he told MESSENGER. "Perhaps there will be another major thrust of some sort around the 300th anniversary of the Church of the Brethren in 2008."

Meanwhile, considerable energy has been given to soliciting donations through direct-mail appeals generated by Stratmark Corp., of Richardson, Texas. Response to the mailings is up over last year, though the appeals are sometimes controversial among Brethren because the letters resemble secular fundraising mail. Nevertheless, the direct mail "provides a means of communication and gives people a chance to hear what's going on," Neher said. "This is providing a way for more people to be involved in our programs."

The Funding office grew out of the 1996 "redesign" of the General Board staff, assigning it the dual responsibility of promoting congregational giving and individual giving, which had been separated before. The Funding office, with its staff of six people, addresses congregational giving in part by providing stewardship education materials and by mailing promotional resources for special offerings like the upcoming Christmas Achievement emphasis. The Funding staff has also begun calling to thank each congregation that gives to the General Board. And it is preparing a video to help spread the word to congregations about denominational ministries. Neher often reminds church members that Church of the Brethren denominational ministries are particularly efficient, with only a 5.01 percent administrative cost.

Ben Fishman

Some question whether congregational giving, still the largest source of Funding for denominational programs, gets as much promotional attention as it deserves. "Ideally, we'd all be stronger if everybody gave through their congregations," Neher agrees.

Everything needs emphasis at once, leaving plenty of work for the Funding team. In a recent report to the General Board, Neher provided a look at his "done" projects list, which included: worked on the Sudan Crisis special appeal letter, sent thank you letters to districts showing giving increases, finished the Funding department's 1999 budget, made presentations at NOAC, sent out 5,000 congregational outreach planning packets. His "to do" projects included: send follow-up letter to Behold donors, put new information on the Funding Web site, organize materials for a "Planned Giving Sunday" promotion.

The lists go on and on. In the midst of all the projects to be completed and priorities to be juggled, the challenge for the Funding office is to remember its overarching themes: That Christians are stewards of God's financial resources. That the church is an efficient place to "do the work of Jesus." And that both Christians and the church are transformed by giving.

Brethrening

Where's Pastor Ralph?

At the dinner held in honor of Ralph Moyer when he retired last year as pastor of the Lititz (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, friends revealed the secret of his long and successful ministry. He had named his bass-fishing boat "Visitation." So when parishioners called to ask the pastor's whereabouts, the church secretary would duly report, "He's out on Visitation."

MESSENGER *would like to publish other short, colorful, humorous or poignant stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submission to* MESSENGER, *1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at ffarrar_gb@brethren.org.*

A SPECIAL REPORT

Excitement is growing in the Dominican Republic

With hammers, drums, and love, the beat goes on!

BY EARL K. ZIEGLER

They came on foot mostly, walking along the dirt roads lined with banana trees to the exciting dedication of a new church n the Guaricano section of the capial city of Santo Domingo. People started arriving long before the 4 p.m. service was to begin. The pastor, Angélica Berguerite, better known as Diamira, was dressed in white, beaming and praising the Lord as the local community and the members of the various Dominican Churches of the Brethren filled the sanctuary.

The main floor of the sanctuary held 300 adult worshipers, and the balcony was filled with 200 children and youth. Many others crowded the doorways or peered through the barred windows to experience this once in a lifetime event. The crowd was estimated to be approximately 700 worshipers altogether.

Visiting with the children *and adults in front of the Viajama church.*

Earlier on dedication day —Aug. 30, 1998— the local believers gathered in the pastor's house for a time of worship, after which 40 persons traveled to the baptismal site at the river where prayer was made, instruction was given, and 12 youth and adults took the vows of faithfulness to Christ and the church. They were baptized in the Brethren tradition of trine immersion, followed by prayer and laying on of hands. Immediately a 15-year-old youth came forward requesting baptism, promising to attend the discipleship classes that each must take prior to baptism. He came up out of the water beaming, excited about this new life in Christ, and joined in the singing with the others (in Spanish) songs such as "Come, Thou Fount," "There is a Fountain," and "At the Cross."

Those 13 baptized included a 57-year-old man and other adults, with the youngest being about 15. Pastor Diamira reported preparing 40 more believers (including her husband) for baptism and church membership this fall.

The names of those baptized on this dedication Sunday read like poetry to Americans new to Hispanic culture: Efraín e los Santos, Christen Alberto Cepúlveda, Ramón Stahualfa Caralsasalto, Ingrid Obliguelina Contreig, Carlos Figuereo, Raquel Gusmán, Brígidon Almarante de Faverg, Anastacio de los Santos, Ramón Vicente Berguete, Freddy Acosta, César Erilseito, Jorge Aurelio Rodríguez, and Carmen Alvarez.

In a prayer service in her ground floor house in 1990, Pastor Diamira voiced her dream to grow a large church in the capital city. She said to the several visiting Brethren from the US, "You buy the land; we'll build the church." While the actual project differed from her dream in its details, it was one of full cooperation, as the US workers and the Dominican workers built the church laboring side by side.

Joy exploded on dedication day. Praising God was visual and vocal! Joy in Jesus was readily apparent. How appropriate are the words of Mother Teresa of India to this ministry in the Dominican Republic: "All for the love of Jesus."

The freshly painted pink church building located in the Guaricano section of the capital city is built on land where many threw their garbage. In the Dominican Republic, as in many developing countries, it seems that God is moving in very dramatic and miraculous ways.

For example, Randy Rhoade, who works for the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Haiti, came to the dedication. His family worships at the Conewago Church of the Brethren in Hershey, Pa., where Galen Hackman is pastor. Since Galen was at the dedication, Randy came to participate and visit with his pastor. He and his friend were driving around attempting to find the church building. Frustrated at no success, they stopped and prayed. Shortly, a young man with a car drove up alongside and asked, "Are you looking for the new church?" They replied in the affirmative, and the stranger said, "Follow me." He led them to the church site and while Randy and his friend were amazed at their find, the stranger disappeared. They truly experienced an angel among them.

The four-hour service was energized by the tremendous leadership of the local youth who led the expectant congregation in enthusiastic singing accompanied by the usual drums, maracas, and guitars. A group of Puerto Rican Brethren came to celebrate with the church and played the various instruments. The singing was awesome; heaven's choir could hardly compete. I delivered the sermon, and the dedication of the building was led by Guillermo Encarnación. Representatives of the various Church of the Brethren congregations sang, brought greetings, or shared in drama.

Pastor Diamira is developing great leadership in the church, including her daughter, Jessenia, a medical student and capable song leader, and her son, Wilson, who is nurturing a new fellowship given birth by the Guaricano church. She is assisted in her ministry by Guillermo Morille, a licensed minister.

Two workcamps for the building of the Guaricano church were held in February and October of 1997. Both workcamps were directed by building contractor Harold Metzler of Memorial Church, Martinsburg, Pa. The Dominican Church district board chose where the church was to be built, and the General Board authorized the raising of $40,000 needed for the project. The workcamps were designed for a mutual working relationship with as many Dominicans as US workers involved. As a Dominican brother observed, "By working with you side by side, we learn to know the Brethren." A total of 26 stateside workers volunteered a week to help. In June this year 17 youth and 4 adults volunteered to join the Dominican youth in painting the church.

Galen Hackman

Baptism in the river *on Dedication Day, Aug. 30, 1998, by pastors Diamira and Juan.*

Our small group traveled four hours on Aug. 28 to Viajama church to visit the mission work and hear from the people. The children, with a few adults, sang a full hour. Napoleon, one of the oldest members, entertained the visitors with a light supper. At 6:30 p.m. about 100 believers gathered for a time of spirited singing, prayers for healing, and a time of recommitment. The service ended at 8:30 p.m.

The Brethren mission in the Dominican Republic began when Hurricane David swept the island in 1979, devastating the poor in the area. Jorge Toledo and a few Puerto Rican Brethren transported medicine and clothing to the victims in the name of Jesus. They also responded to the spiritual needs by preaching the gospel. The Dominicans responded with open and receptive hearts and so the Church of the Brethren was born! The Dominicans refer to Jorge Toledo as the "St. Paul of the Caribbean." Sixteen

PUERTO RICO

Jorge Toledo, *Puerto Rican Christian whose response to Hurricane David led to beginnings of Church of the Brethren congregations in the Dominican Republic.*

LESIA DE LOS HERMANOS
NUEVO RENACER
S ESTAN BIENVENIDOS

Pastor David o*f the Los Toros church with Galen Hackman and Earl Ziegler.*

recognized congregations of the Church of the Brethren gather for worship each Lord's Day.

The Dominican Christians challenge us with their profound faith and expressed emotions. Their evangelistic fervor is contagious. While they have leadership problems and money problems stemming from their country's poor economy, they are steadfast in their belief that they serve a risen Savior.

The Dominican churches are calling! Will the Brethren respond? Will we hear the call? Will we catch the spirit?

Let us celebrate the new life in Christ. Let us encourage the growing church in the Dominican Republic with our faithful prayers and tithes. The needs are great. The blessings in sharing are bountiful. The mission is growing. How will we respond? *M.*

Earl K. Ziegler is pastor of Lampeter (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, where he has served for 10 years. Prior to that he was district executive for Atlantic Northeast District. He served as Annual Conference moderator in 1994. He has made at least six mission trips to the Dominican Republic since 1989, and has helped to build three churches there.

How did we become involved in the Dominican Republic?

Puerto Rican Brethren made initial contacts in the Dominican Republic after Hurricane David devastated the country in 1979. Responding to the needs, Jorge Toledo led a humanitarian response and developed a relationship with Christians in the southwest province of Azua. Over a period of years, Toledo's charismatic preaching resulted in conversions and the emergence of small worship groups in several villages.

Communications between the Puerto Rican Brethren and denominational staff led to an exploratory visit to the Dominican Republic by the General Board's Latin America/Caribbean staff, Karen Calderón, in 1983. Responding to the expression of needs voiced by these communities, Calderón agreed to support the outreach efforts of the Puerto Rican church in a health ministry among the Dominican communities. Two simple buildings were erected and a relationship with a Dominican pastor was established. A staff team was recruited, but did not become active on the ground and the venture was dropped.

Brother Jorge Toledo continued periodic preaching visits among these Dominican communities, often funded from his personal resources.

Continued encouragement from Puerto Rican Brethren prompted another visit to the Dominican in 1989 by a delegation including Toledo and the General Board's regional representative, Yvonne Dilling.

The outcome of this assessment visit was a General Board recommendation to the 1990 Annual Conference proposing that the Board partner with the Puerto Rican church in a denominational ministry to the Dominican Republic. The Conference adopted this recommendation. (*Summarized from the 1990 Annual Conference minutes.*)

—MERVIN KEENEY

A SPECIAL REPORT

Walking together—the next steps

Congregational support is the key for Dominican mission workers

BY MERVIN KEENEY

The church in the Dominican Republic emerged from the outreach of the Puerto Rican church through the biblically rooted, wholistic mission approach that combines concern for both physical and spiritual needs. [See sidebar on history, p. 17.]

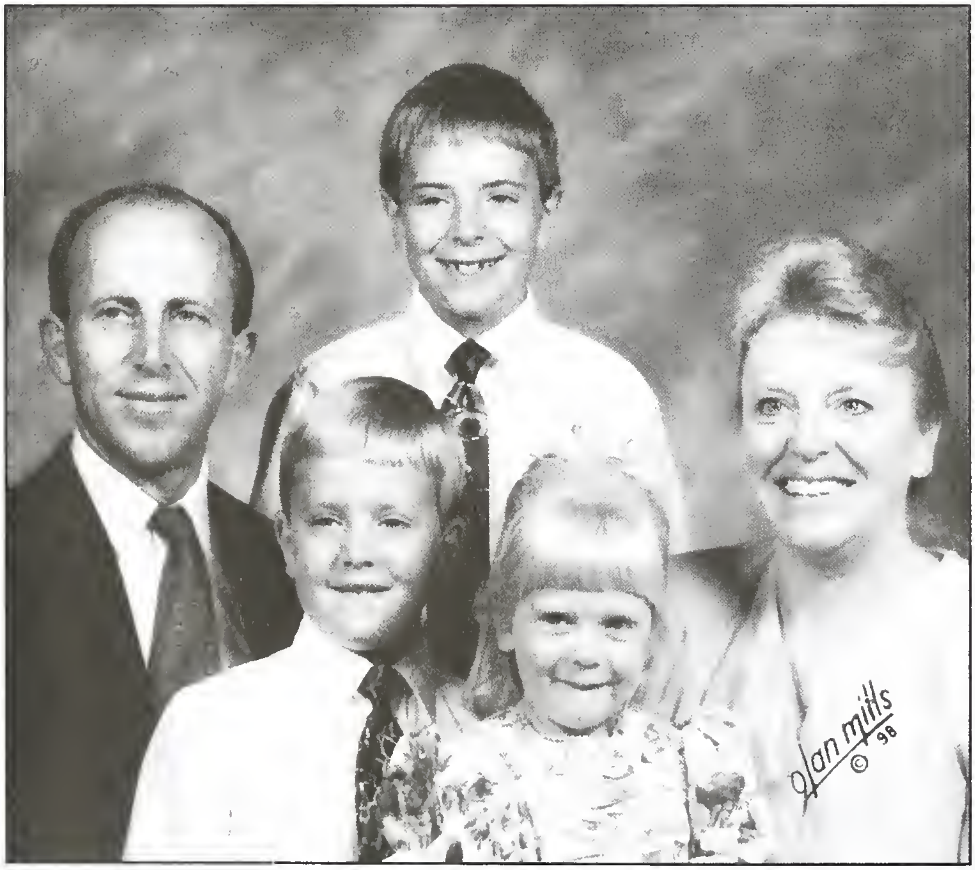
In this decade, the focus of our mission partnership has been church development and ldeadership training. A theological education by extension program in 1997 involved 104 people, and leaders have been involved in a reading/seminar program in preparation for ordination. Meanwhile, a number of workcamps have resulted in construction of church buildings for some congregations, and other workcamps are being planned.

By May of this year there were 16 recognized congregations, most of them located in the south central part of the country, in what is called the Conference of the Churches of the Brethren in the Dominican Republic. The group has an administrative board with a president, and a moderator who carries the role of spiritual encouragement.

For the past few years Guillermo Encarnación, a Dominican by birth who is pastor of Alpha and Omega Church of the Brethren in Lancaster, Pa., provided part-time oversight for the Dominican church through quarterly visits. The long-distance relationship was an interim plan for oversight of the Dominican mission after the resignation of Yvonne Dilling, former staff representative for Latin America/Caribbean. Part-time arrangements had the positive effects of surfacing local leadership and permitting the church to develop with some autonomy. Now it appears that this arrangement may also have planted seeds for the next steps in the relationship between the Dominican church and the US church.

In September 1997, during a visit to the Dominican church for their quarterly board meeting, the Dominican leadership asked Brother Guillermo and me if the church could "send someone to walk with us." As we explored what was intended by this request, we heard church leaders speak to their vision for a mission worker who might work alongside them. They spoke of their desire for greater connection with the Church of the Brethren in the US. They longed for a deeper understanding of who the Brethren are, what we believe, and how we practice our faith. And, as the church grew and these leaders faced new questions about who does what, they sought help with practical questions about how we operate institutionally.

At this time the General Board was moving through tremendous transitions, and mission budgets were greatly reduced. Yet many in the denomination observed that there was support for increased denominational mission, and believed that



Soon-to-be Dominican *mission workers Jerry and Becky Baile Crouse, with Stephen, Jacob, and Christy* funds not presently coming to the denominational office might be attracted to an identifiable mission position.

From this convergence of needs and ideas, the staff developed a proposal and sought the General Board's blessing for a joint mission venture that would partner with congregations to place a mission worker in the Dominican Republic to work alongside the young Dominican leadership. Reminiscent of the missionary support accounts of the mid-century, the hope was to "speak the language" of congregations that may be withholding funds from the General Board out of concern that funds are seemingly "lost" in the unified budget, or those congregations looking for ways to specifically support mission.

It was an experiment. If churches came forward to support this placement, it would happen. If not, then the placement could not proceed. This approach communicates the real sense of urgency and we hope will convey the message that "my dollar will make a difference."

Early in the process there was a question whether to seek the person first or find the money first. In the end, both processes were implemented somewhat simultaneously. Gerald and Rebecca Baile Crouse have accepted the call to the position of mission coordinator for the Dominican Republic, serving as a team, beginning in January.

These two gifted persons bring exceptional background and experience to the assignment. Since 1988 they have been serving in a team ministry at the Antioch Church of the Brethren in Rocky Mount, Va. Both are graduates of Bethany Theological Seminary, and have previous overseas experience from Brethren Volunteer Service, workcamps, or college exchanges. Jerry brings Spanish from his childhood years on the mission field in Ecuador.

While drawing new dollars for mission is one desired outcome, another central goal of this missionary support arrangement is to help congregations regain a sense of direct connection with mission. Not only does the financial support have a more direct feel, increased communication will offer supporting churches a greater sense of involvement. The communication and connection links in this support arrangement open a window for more of our membership to view how God is at work among sisters and brothers in the Dominican church and to become a part of this ministry in the Caribbean.

The General Board is seeking about $50,000 from congregations to support the venture. So far enough interest has been shown and pledges have been made to allow it to go forward, with faith that more of our members will be eager to respond to this invitation from the Dominican Republic church to walk together. Congregations wishing to support the Crouse family and this significant ministry among the Dominican church are invited to contact the General Board's office for Global Mission Partnerships at 800-323-8039. M.

Mervin Keeney serves as the General Board's director for Global Mission Partnerships.

Brethrening

Dog-gone sermon

Back in 1931-32, I attended the old Church of the Brethren on Bath Avenue here in Waynesboro, Va. Our pastor at that time was D. B. Garber, who for the most part was a man of the "old cloth." But in spite of his dress habits and seeming "old order" philosophy, he had a terrific sense of humor.

He told me of an incident that happened when he was "young and green," as he put it. He was holding his first revival meeting in a small church in the foothills of the Blue Ridge. He noticed an elderly man come into the meetinghouse, followed by a hound dog. The man sat down in the end of the front bench. The dog followed and lay down at the end of the bench. Brother Garber said this just didn't seem right, so he went down and asked the man to take the dog out. The man did and returned to take his seat again on the front pew.

As Brother Garber got into his sermon, he began to think perhaps he had done the wrong thing. During the singing of the last song, he thought to himself, "That dog was likely the man's best friend and wouldn't have caused any trouble."

Back at the door, as he was shaking hands with people as they left at the end of the service, the "dog" man came by and Brother Garber said, "I'm sorry I asked you to take your dog out. Your dog wasn't bothering anyone."

"That's all right. I'm glad you did," the man replied. "I wouldn't have had my dog heard that sermon for anything in the world."

—*Don Snyder, Waynesboro, Va.*

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The living stories of BVS

A 50th anniversary reunion in New Windsor

Story by Walt Wiltschek. Photos by Nevin Dulabaum.

Sunday morning *the lights of the 231 BVS units were represented by colorful candles. Beginning with the earliest units and concluding with the latest, people approached the table to light a candle that represented their unit.*

Organizers selected "Living the Story" as the phrase to promote and uplift the 50th anniversary of Brethren Volunteer Service this year. It's an apt choice, as it can describe both the ongoing mission of BVS, as well as the countless individual stories that it has created through the lives of its 5,000-plus volunteers since its inception.

Many of those stories were shared, some again and again, as former and current BVS staff and volunteers gathered at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., Oct. 2-4 to celebrate 50 years of BVS. From the time guests first came in, strolling by tables featuring memorabilia from each decade of BVS, or looking around at the faces in the room to see if they still recognized anyone, the BVS story was alive and well.

Truman Wiles, of Eugene, Ore., was among the first to enter BVS after its whirlwind creation at the 1948 Annual Conference. Wiles served as part of Unit 2, long before most of the people in the recent Unit 231 were even born.

Wiles found himself at that point uncertain where he wanted to go with his life, not sure what he wanted to do or how to do it.

"I went into BVS because I was searching," Wiles said. "I don't know that my career was directly affected by my experience there, but it certainly affected my thinking."

As his project for the year, Wiles worked with youth at a church in Springfield, Ore., that was just being built. Then he went on to Manchester College and to Bethany Theological Seminary, with thoughts of going into the ministry. He didn't pursue that route, but he did find his niche, staying on at Bethany for more than 20 years to work with maintenance and in the speech lab, working with many students through the years. "I wouldn't want to trade that year in BVS for any other way of searching," Wiles said.

Those who attended the anniversary weekend didn't have to worry about searching to find their way from place to place, as tours of the Brethren Service Center were offered, along with shopping in The Peace Place bookstore and SERRV's International Gift Shop.

They could reflect on their own

Jewel Howlett, *Virginia Holderread Doll, and Mary Ann McClure Baer pose with a picture of their orientation unit.*

Well-known actor Don Murray *reads selections from a play he has written about his BVS experience.*

searches through BVS, however. The program at a Friday night banquet looked at BVS over the decades and several insight sessions examined everything from the history of BVS, to its presence in Europe, to its present-day work and ways to get in touch with the "BVS fire" again.

For Homer and Rosetta Fry, of North Manchester, Ind., the fire is still burning brightly. While many volunteers enter BVS as youth or young adults, the Frys made BVS a golden-years project.

"It was like God kept kind of nudging us, 'When you retire, what are you going to do?'" Rosetta Fry said. "We thought it was important to tithe time, too, as well as money, but we didn't know what to do, and BVS was the program that kept coming up."

They set out to serve two years, first at the Catholic Worker House in San Antonio, Texas, where they faced quick adjustment to inner-city life after growing up in farm country, and then at Camp Eder in Fairfield, Pa.

"It's made a very much stronger faith and opened our eyes to other parts of the world," Fry said. "You find out how other parts of the world live. . . . We wouldn't want to have missed that experience for anything. We found out what a joy it is to volunteer, that it's a joy to be able to serve. BVS started it, I think."

It was only the beginning, as the two have remained active in disaster relief projects and other volunteer work.

Saturday evening featured a celebration for all those who had volunteered in BVS. It included the introduction, to a standing ovation, of the 26 members of Unit 231, just preparing to set out on their projects.

Actor Don Murray, who found BVS as a conscientious objector seeking alternative service, delivered the keynote address by sharing a play he's written about his experience. He saluted the audience and the work they had done as an inspiration, and called his time in BVS one in which he "walked with the angels of peace."

Judy Mills Reimer, now the General Board's executive director, confessed to feeling a bit like an angel herself when she prepared as a member of Unit 56 to begin her project working with children at a clinic in post-war Kassel, Germany.

"I just knew my little piece was going to help put this world in order," Reimer said. "The biggest shock was how this world was helping me and teaching me as I worked with these children."

It was then, working with the so-called "enemy" from World War II, that she became aware of the connectedness of all God's children, and the importance of "eyeballing" one another and talking together. She had been working toward that vision since childhood.

"BVS really did push me and enhance my faith journey so that it became mine and not Mom's and Dad's," Reimer said. "It helped me recommit the commitment I had made as a 10-year-old at Camp Bethel . . . that every one of us is involved in Christ's work."

The stories of BVS go on and on, each with different twists and experiences, but most with life-changing implications.

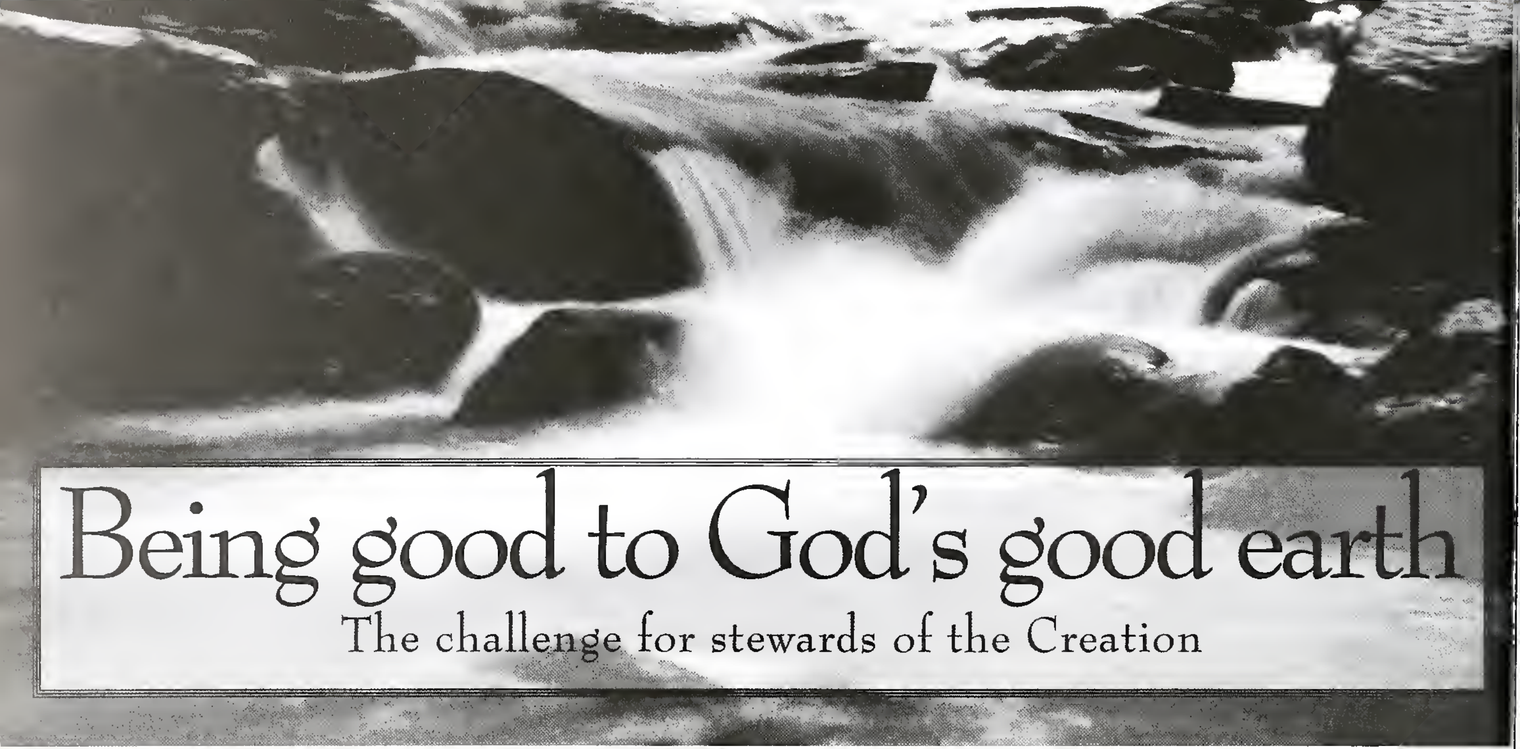
Steve Jones, of York, Pa., became the first from his Kansas church to enter BVS, uncertain what to expect, and ended up meeting his future wife while on project at New Windsor — one of many relationships that began through BVS.

Judy Dotterer, of Union Bridge, Md., talked of finding an understanding of what it really meant to be Brethren and fueling her interest in the work of the church.

Alma Long, one of those who helped bring BVS into existence at the 1948 Annual Conference, spoke about the incredible drama and power of that moment, "like a football game and somebody made a touchdown."

The 50th anniversary weekend celebrated these stories and many more. With the commissioning of Unit 231 at the closing worship service of the weekend, it's certain that those stories will continue. *M.*

Walt Wiltschek is associate pastor at the Westminster (Md.) Church of the Brethren, working with youth and Christian education. Prior to holding that position he worked full-time as a newspaper reporter and copy editor.



Being good to God's good earth

The challenge for stewards of the Creation

dcliff

BY DAVID RADCLIFF

It would've been funny were it not so sad. Signs along the highway announced in stark black and white, "Littering punished by fines of up to $1000 and one year in prison."

Granted, litter is bothersome. It clutters the scenery. It demands attention from squads of orange-clad, shotgun-guarded cleanup crews. It is trash in the wrong place. We like our trash sent away to the dump or shipped offshore, as if we had truly "thrown it away"—we don't like it hanging around where we can still see it.

But riding along this particular state's highways, it was hard to believe that litter was the biggest problem. Kudzu, an invasive plant species imported to cut down erosion of highway embankments, completely enveloped whole stands of trees in a deadly embrace. Thousands of acres of forest throughout the south are ruined every year by this vine. Yet we can be sure that no fines were levied against those who first brought it here.

On the slopes along either side of the highway, telltale patches of young trees all the same height revealed the rampant clearcutting of thousands of acres of forests. While we know that vanishing habitat is the main reason that 25 percent of the world's mammals and 11 percent of bird species are endangered, no one will be spending time in prison for these government-sanctioned forestry practices.

Further along the road, tracts of tobacco turn brown in the late summer sunshine. In these places, God's good earth—meant to nourish and sustain life—will bear a deadly harvest. Yet no charges will be brought to bear.

The vehicles on the highway itself bring many times more devastation to God's creation each year than any litter dropped from them along the way. Each one will emit several tons of carbon dioxide into the earth's atmosphere in a year's time, adding fuel to the fire of global warming. But we won't see a roadside sign warning of penalties for excessive driving.

This state is not alone, however, in missing the mark in its understanding of stewardship of God's earth. Most of us in a country like ours find it difficult to hit the mark when it comes to doing our part to care for the earth. Meanwhile, God's creation wheezes and reels at the ongoing impact of human activity.

The facts speak for themselves:

- Half the earth's original forest cover is now gone, including all but 5 percent of forests in the US. Every year, the earth loses another 37 million acres. Tropical rainforest alone is being cut down at the rate of a football field per second. In some places, replanting replaces a portion of the trees lost, although not the original diversity; in Africa, deforestation exceeds reforestation by a factor of 29.
- Annual global loss of topsoil from cropland due to erosion is estimated at 24 billion tons.
- Six billion tons of carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere each year due to human activity. In the United States, the rate is about 5 tons of carbon dioxide per person per year.
- For most of the earth's history, the rate of species' extinction was less than 10 per year. Today, scientists estimate that one species becomes extinct every 12 minutes.
- Over 50 percent of the original wetlands of the US have been lost; in California, 95 percent of wetlands have been drained for agriculture and development.

From a purely self-serving perspective, humankind should be alarmed by such statistics. Wetlands, for instance, serve as a giant sponge for excessive rainfall, as do forests on steep mountain slopes. The loss of both is a key reason for the recent catastrophic floods in China—which affected some 230 million people—as well as a cause of floods in the US Midwest.

Plants and animals have tremendous value to the pharmaceutical industry; the annual value of medicinal drugs that contain active ingredients derived from plants is $40 billion. Soil conservation can save billions of dollars in otherwise lost productivity. An acre of rainforest will absorb 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide each year, helping temper our excessive carbon dioxide output.

As much sense as this practical approach to conservation and preservation makes, this still casts God's creation in a solely supportive role *vis a vis* humankind. Indeed, it is hard to carry on a very long conversation about God's creation without using the phrase "natural resources." Yet our biases are revealed in our choice of words, as we indicate that the true purpose of creation is to serve as a "resource" for humanity.

At every step of the way in the creative process unveiled in Genesis 1, God calls the newly created cosmos "good." From the waters and the land, to the fruit-bearing plants, to the darkness and the light, to the swarms of fish and birds and creeping (and creepy) things, God "saw that it was good." There is goodness in this creation apart from its provision for human beings.

It is true that humans, as those created in God's image, and the ones over whom God pronounced "very good," are given the charge to exercise dominion over all the rest of creation. The presupposition here is that as the embodiment of God's own presence, humans have the capability and wisdom to be good stewards over God's earth.

As Walter Brueggemann says in his commentary *Genesis*, "The task of dominion does not have to do with exploitation or abuse. It has to do with securing the well-being of every other creature and bringing the promise of each to full fruition." Or, as the Lord says in Genesis 2:15, we are not only to till, but also to "keep" the garden.

Suddenly, this "dominion" begins to sound more like the role of a parent with a child, or a teacher with a student, or a pastor with church members. The one with dominion is in a sense "in charge," but is also "charged" with bringing out the best in the other, helping the other toward fulfillment, interacting with the other not as a demanding tyrant but as a shepherd who would give her life for the sheep. And in any of these settings, were the one in charge to abuse their authority by exploiting those in their care, we would quickly condemn them and stop the abuse.

We do not have these same high standards for ourselves when it comes to exercising dominion over God's creation. We rarely think long over our excesses; we give little heed to the damage we inflict. It is as if we are not accountable to anyone—even to God—for our behavior.

There's a reason we don't hold ourselves accountable. To do so would force us to take a hard look at ourselves and our stewardship of the earth. And then there would be changes to consider, both inside and outside—both our attitudes about God's earth and our actions toward it.

The struggle against roadway litter might need to give way to struggles more personal and to-the-point.

For me, the dilemma dawns as daily as the choice about how to get from one place to another. I can bike to work as long as the weather holds, although our town has no cross-town bike paths. But bring on a little rain or snow or out-of-the way errands, and the car is the only feasible alternative—unless I want to figure out the bus route and spend about three times as long to get there as I would on my bike, not to mention the car. So there I go again, adding about a pound of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere for every mile I drive.

They say that as a US citizen I use up just about my weight in material goods every day. I don't eat or drink or directly purchase that much daily, but when you add up all we consume—petroleum, metals, wood, packaging—that's our per capita average. Experts also say that if every global citizen consumed at such a rate, we would need five planets like this one to sustain ourselves. And although I try to do my part—even picking up stray cans along my bike route—I'm sure I'm also doing my part to out-consume the planet's ability to provide.

And while you're at it, blame me for the destruction of the rainforest. I've tried to cut down on the meat I eat and out-of-season fruit I buy, but I'm sure to have eaten citrus grown or meat raised on slashed and burned land in the tropics. The pencil I'm using was probably made from that tree in Belize that by itself is home to more species of living things than some European nations.

So what's a person to do? The first thing is to really think of oneself as a steward. "I myself have a responsibility to care for God's earth." And I do or don't do this by the choices I make every day about my lifestyle and about how I will or won't be involved in community or national debate about environmental stewardship.

And we must begin to understand the world around as a relationship, not as a resource. If we are to have dominion in the manner of a teacher or pastor or parent—or the Lord—then we must enter into a relationship with our world. I don't speak here of some mystical union, but of an awareness that our lives are bound up with the world around us, and do not exist as separate entities.

Then make the hard choices to reduce consumption, to seek alternative and sustainable living patterns, to advocate with friends and neighbors for better treatment of God's earth. These choices do not have to be onerous. I find a real delight in looking at a line full of clothes drying in the sun—or even in the basement. There is a sense of harmony with God's order that comes from simple deeds of responsible stewardship.

God's earth likely cannot stand another century like the one we are leaving behind. Indeed, we may choose to change our ways when we see that planetary life is being jeopardized. I would like to think, however, that we'll come to our senses long before this, building a relationship with God's earth that is responsible, sustainable, and full of the simple pleasures that come to those whose lives reflect the harmony that God intends for this good creation.

David Radcliff is director of the Brethren Witness office of the General Board..

Minicha

e main *auction hall.*

Jim Landis, *one of the auctioneers, does his thing.*

A clown *was one of the many diversions.*

An auction

A Pennsylvania 'miracle' raises mone

Story and photos by Wayne Zunkel.

When autumn air begins to blow and before the leaves are clothed in color, in the last weekend in September, a miracle occurs just down the road from the Midway Church of the Brethren at Lebanon, Pa. The Atlantic Northeast and Southern Districts of Pennsylvania Brethren Disaster Relief Auction is held at the Lebanon Area Fairgrounds.

Fifteen area auctioneers volunteered their time at the event held Sept. 25–26. This year's chairpersons were Marlin and Jane Snavely of the White Oak congregation, Penryn, Pa. They report there was an estimated crowd of 9,000 and approximately $540,000 was raised. From the proceeds, 80 percent goes to the Church of the Brethren General Board for use in the denomination's disaster relief ministries. The other 20 percent goes to projects in the two districts.

It all began in the late 1960s when a group of enthusiastic youth and their advisors, under the leadership of Henry Rist, who now lives in Myrtle Beach, S.C., organized a district youth auction. They sold mostly used household furnishings and a used car that wouldn't run (which brought $20). The first year raised $5,000. A few years later, the project was abandoned.

In 1976, James Gibbel of the Lititz, Pa., congregation, Jacob Ruhl of the East Fairview congregation (Manheim, Pa.), and auctioneer Jay Witman of the White Oak congregation, revived the idea. Since then the auction has become an annual event, receiving national attention on such programs as "The Today Show." Across the years it has raised more than $6 million toward helping the Brethren serve people in disasters around the world. Other districts have begun auctions of their own in Mid-Atlantic, Middle Pennsylvania, Shenandoah, and West Marva.

The excitement begins during the first week in August, when 28,000 copies of a free 64-page booklet, describing items available at the auction and including stories about the denomination, are made available to all of the churches of the two districts, plus as many area businesses as will take them.

The publicity pays off when thousands show up on auction day. Three auctioneers rotated the labors in the main auction room. But there were several auctions going on at various times. In addition to the main auction, there was one for livestock, another just for heifers, a center hall auction for sports cards, furniture and toys,

John Holsinger, *Ken Kreider, Joe Witmore, and Jane Holsinger stir the caramel and the freshly popped corn.*

Aunt Ellen (Young), *flanked by Janice Holsinger and Carroll Kreider, who now run her caramel coated popcorn stand.*

Auctioneer *Jay Witman, one of the fathers of the auction.*

that cares

for the hurting peoples of the world

nd a pole barn auction for tools and awn and garden equipment.

There were special moments. A rocheted doily made by 98-year-old vy Alwine of Annville, Pa., was sold ive times Friday evening, bringing a otal of $895.

There were tables of produce, anned and baked goods, and a uilding for arts and crafts. On Earth Peace Assembly had a table of games, -shirts, and books. There were special stands for french fries and others or ice cream. A pig roast was a hit vith hungry attendees. Hundreds of lates of fried chicken were served.

A tree donated by an area nursery vas auctioned, bringing $1,375. A voman donated her mobile home in ebring, Fla., to be auctioned. A lemon ie sold twice, bringing a total of $195. piece of 3-D art by popular area rtist Abner Zook brought $6,700. A walnut tallcase clock brought $6,700.

An "Aunt Ellen's Popcorn Stand," begun some 15 years ago, continues as a popular tradition. This year more than 400 pounds of popcorn were popped. Eighty persons shared in the work. There has been an average yearly profit of $2,102 over the last eight years.

There was a profit (after expenses) of $108,000 from the sale of a house built specially for the event. The heifer sale brought $71,000. The 64 quilts and 88 wall hangings brought $51,000. One quilt sold twice. The highest selling quilt, donated by the Lititz (Pa.) church, sold for $2,300. The livestock auction brought in $18,000. Food stands contributed $35,626. The bakery stand brought in $11,381, and the farmer's market $10,365.

But more important than the money is the fact that this is an event that brings together all elements of the church, working enthusiastically side by side.

This granddaddy of all Brethren relief auctions grows each year on its own strength. For many Brethren in the East it is one happy, profitable event that tells the world about Brethren commitment to a faith that cares about the hurting peoples of the world. This year Brethren from as far away as Mesa, Ariz., and McPherson, Kan. —including Annual Conference Moderator Lowell Flory— came to see. Next year, you might want to join them too. M.

Wayne Zunkel, of Elizabethtown, Pa., is editor of "The Columns," the Elizabethtown church newsletter. For 32 years he has been editor of the A.N.D. Brethren Peace Fellowship newsletter.

The five feisty daughters of Zelophehad

by Christy J. Waltersdorff

I am one of five daughters, so I was pleased to learn there is a Bible story about five daughters in Numbers 27:1-8. These young women had the audacity to challenge Moses on an issue of justice. They didn't just challenge Moses, they challenged God as well.

With audacious and unprecedented boldness, they stood before the entire assembly and declared the injustice of the system of inheritance. Asserting that they should not suffer discrimination simply on the basis of their gender, they claimed a right to their father's land.

Zelophehad was a righteous man who died in the wilderness, leaving no sons to inherit the land promised to him. To ensure that the land remained with the tribe to which it was first apportioned, the land was passed from eldest son to eldest son within the same family. The daughters point out to Moses that, according to the rules, their father's name would be lost because no one from his family would receive the inheritance of land. "Why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan because he had no son? Give to us a possession among our father's brothers" (Num. 27:4).

Never having dealt with this particular situation before, Moses goes directly to God. Surprisingly, God agrees with the young women. God says to Moses, "The daughters of Zelophehad are right in what they are saying; you shall indeed let them possess an inheritance . . . " (Num. 27:7).

Born and raised in a patriarchal society, having relatively no value as single women, without a father, they challenged the system and God took their side. They confronted the law and they won.

At the beginning of the book of Numbers, Israel moved from the immovable setting of Mount Sinai, where the definitive revelation of God's will for Israel was revealed, to the portable tent of meeting, the tabernacle. God promised to continue to reveal the divine will from the tabernacle as new circumstances and questions arose. The people of Israel are a people on the move, and God's law moves with them.

Today, as then, God's word is not a sterile and entrenched legalism but a robust and living tradition that leans toward the future in hope and anticipation.

The five daughters did not bring patriarchy to a screeching halt. But they moved their society a few steps forward toward justice.

As a woman I have also come up against those who would refuse to allow me to claim my inheritance because of my gender. I grew up on a poultry farm in York, Pa., the third of five daughters. We had 13,000 laying hens and a busy egg business. If the family farm was going to survive we all had to do our part. I cannot remember being told I couldn't do something on the farm because I was a girl. I do remember my father and grandfather being teased by farmers who asked how all the work was going to get done with all those girls.

I heard my Dad respond one day, "I know that my girls can outwork your boys any day of the week." That felt good, though I was secretly hoping he wouldn't set up a competition.

As a child and teenager growing up in the Church of the Brethren in Southern Pennsylvania, I had no idea that there was another inheritance for me to claim: My inheritance as a child of God, my inheritance as a minister of Jesus Christ. There were no women pastors to be role models for me. I never even met a woman pastor until I was 21 and met Bonnie Kline Smeltzer, then the associate pastor of the Highland Avenue Church in Elgin, Ill.

One of the first women in the Church of the Brethren to claim her inheritance as a minister was Sarah Righter Major. As a young woman she experienced a call to preach. The 1834 Annual Meeting voted against a query giving women the authority to preach. She answered her critics with biblical arguments, and she continued to preach. A member of a committee sent by Annual Meeting to tell her to remain silent admitted, "I could not give my vote to silence someone who could outpreach me."

Proof that things can change came when Sarah preached at Annual Meeting in 1878.

In 1922 Annual Meeting granted women the right to be licensed to preach, but ordination on the same basis as men was not granted until 1958.

Since that time the involvement of women in the church has grown. Women have held and continue to hold key leadership positions in our denomination. The number of women answering the call to ministry increases every year.

There are still, however, many churches and many individuals who would prevent us from claiming our inheritance. But when one person is diminished, we are all diminished. The church needs bold, faithful people who are willing to speak the truth of God—whether they be male or female. Just as the five feisty daughter of Zelophehad inherited what was theirs to claim, so we too have an inheritance in Christ Jesus.

Christy J. Waltersdorff is pastor of York Center Church of the Brethren, Lombard, Ill., and is a member of the General Board.

When will Brethren speak out against the pain, suffering and death brought on by the alcohol industry?

Remember what it was that made Milwaukee famous

I appreciate your excellent coverage of National Youth Conference in the October issue. From my perspective it was truly one of the best gatherings I have ever seen in the church, one from which Annual Conference could learn much. One of the most meaningful moments for me was the profound witness to peace that happened at a nuclear missile silo. The opportunity to proclaim the peace Christ taught was a valuable and necessary example of the prophetic voice we're called to make.

Yet on my way home, as I drove only a few miles away from Ft. Collins, past a huge Budweiser distillery, I couldn't help wondering when that same prophetic voice will ever bear equal witness against the pain, suffering, and death brought on by the alcohol industry, an industry which is linked to more deaths, facilitates more violence, destroys more relationships, and diminishes the quality of far more lives than nuclear weapons ever have.

What a lost opportunity to make a witness against this destructive industry. I long for the day when Brethren will speak out as eloquently on this issue as we have on the issue of nuclear weapons and war. Looks like the next major gathering of Brethren will be in Milwaukee. Hmmm, I wonder what they make there.

David Sollenberger
Annville, Pa.

Thoughts on war heroes and Saving Private Ryan

I recently saw the movie *Saving Private Ryan*. Seeing it was an accident, really. My husband out of town, I drove on the spur of the moment to the theater and bought a ticket. "If you only see one movie this year," I had heard in an advertisement, "make it *Saving Private Ryan*." I succumbed to the hype.

Although I would never have gone to see this movie had I known what I was getting into, I'm glad I saw it. I stayed the whole two and a half hours, watching virtually uninterrupted terror and pain and death, the killing and being killed that was World War II. The horror of war spread out in front of me in excruciatingly graphic scenes that went on and on and on.

The acting was excellent. The special effects were amazing, not to say mind-boggling. Doubtless this movie will be nominated for several Academy Awards. It certainly deserves them. I'm glad I saw *Saving Private Ryan* not for those reasons, however, but because it forced me to think about war. Our society accepts this horror, and in an ironic way, glorifies it. "War is hell," the movie said clearly. "See, it is horror beyond imagining. Yet aren't these men who fought it wonderfully heroic?"

I have a different hero. My father chose to spend time in prison rather than participate in World War II. As a young man, his reading of the Bible led him to believe that Jesus calls us to another way, that war and killing are evil and must be resisted. Raised in a conservative, patriotic Protestant church, never having encountered the Brethren, he had the courage to choose this most unpopular path. Because he was convinced that cooperating in any way with the military system was wrong, he wrote to his draft board and told them he would not register or participate in their process.

He did not try to escape the legal consequences of his choice. He spent a year in prison in El Reno, Okla., before being paroled to Bethany Hospital in Chicago, where he met my mother and the Church of the Brethren. As I watched *Saving Private Ryan*, I thought of my father, a different kind of war hero.

Daddy died last year, but I have been inspired all my life by his courage in standing for his conviction that war is wrong. I thank God for his strong example of faithfulness.

Marilyn Smith Kieffaber
Denton, Md.

Love sexual sinner, hate sin

Concerning your editorial "Casting Out Fear" in the September issue: In Leviticus 20, it seems God was a little tough on sexual sin. I would call your attention also to I Corinthians 6:9-20.

You mention that we differ on the matter of interpretation of the scriptural meaning for our day. Does that mean that you believe that in our day and time we can live on a different standard than what is stated clearly in the Bible?

While you were "dancing in the wind," the issue was simply acceptance. Can the church open its doors to welcome gays and lesbians? This seems to say the Church of the Brethren should accept sinners who desire to keep on sinning. We should give our love and support to practicing gays and lesbians, perhaps to pedophiles, perverts, and rapists, without repentance.

I, and I'm sure most Brethren, will give love, forgiveness, and support to past gays and lesbians, because we love Jesus Christ and believe in his saving power. Jesus accepts everyone, regardless of their spiritual condition, but he doesn't want them to stay that way.

Our church works with alcoholics and I'm sure would be willing to help past gays and lesbians to become close to Christ and live a more fulfilling and abundant life.

William Mercer
Beaverton, Mich.

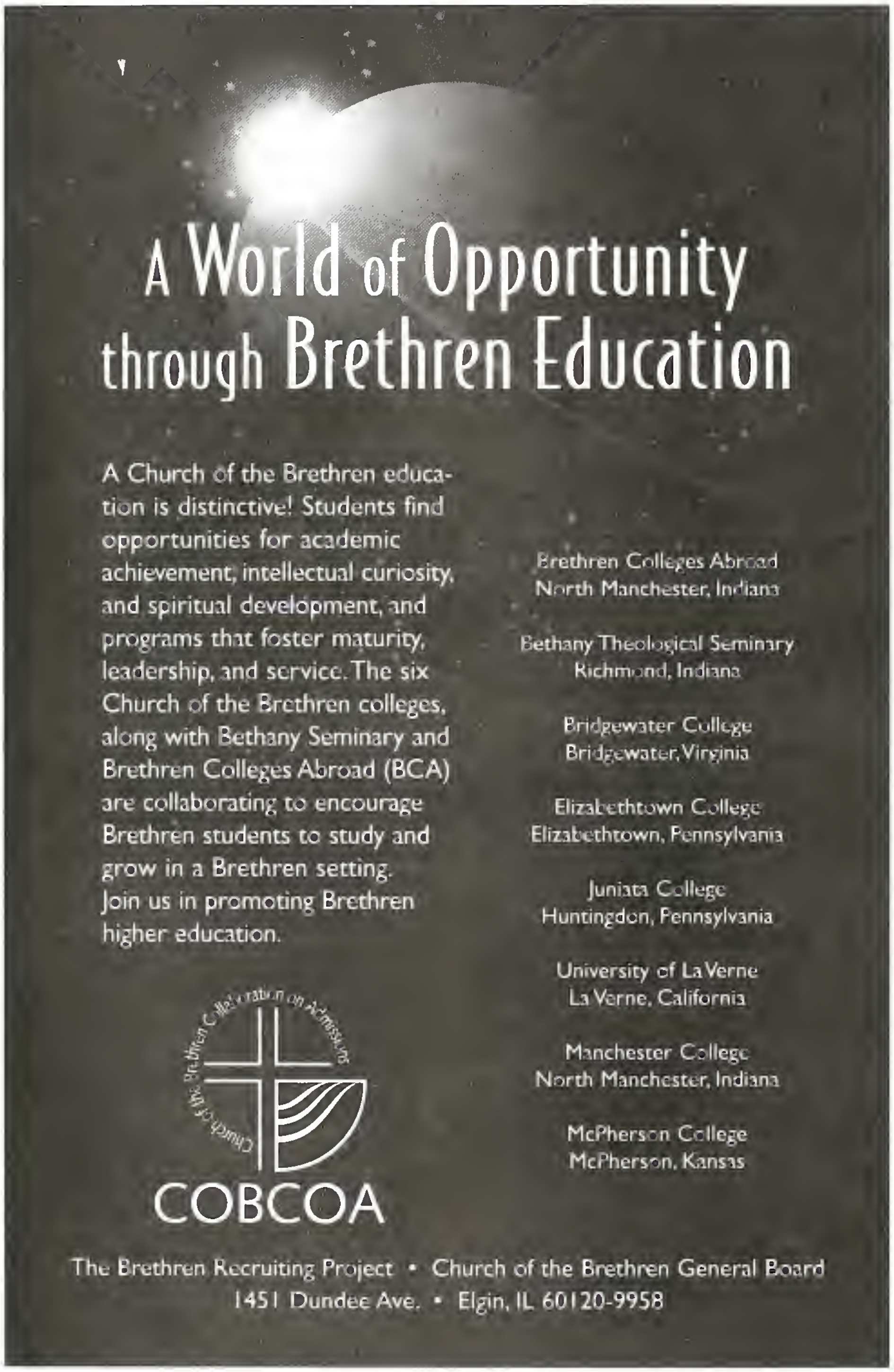
Letters

Can our dialog reflect respect for differences?

Thank you for your sensitive, balanced, and insightful editorial, "Casting Out Fear," in the September issue. The Church of the Brethren, indeed all religious bodies in America, are engaged in a similar debate. The critical question is, to what degree can we respect the views of other Christians when those views differ from our own? Sincere, knowledgeable, faithful Christians stand at different points all along the homophobic continuum. Too often our dialog, which should be carried out with understanding and love, is battered by judgmental intransigence and hatred.

As you write in your editorial: we differ. "We differ with one another on a matter of interpretation of the scriptural meaning for our day." None among us knows the whole and perfect truth. We must all be seekers of that truth. Our prayer for the church is that our dialog can move forward enveloped in a spirit of love.

Becky and David Waa
North Manchester, Ind



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Stand firm on sexuality

In his article, "The Problem with Pluralism" [July], Dale Aukerman's central point, as I read it, is that some biblical doctrines and truths are sufficiently clear to be non-negotiable. On these the church needs to stand firm.

That is why my qualified response to the question posed by the editor in his September editorial is, "No, the church cannot open the doors wide enough to welcome gays and lesbians." Not if such acceptance mean overturning the biblical view that God's gift of sex is to be exercised within the bonds of a lifelong coventional relationship between one man and one woman. (An item that Aukerman did not include in his list of non-negotiables, but that I am adding.)

Homosexuals who affirm this biblical view and thus choose celibacy already are welcome in the church. The battle being waged by the organized Brethren homosexuals is not for them to be accepted as people, but for their sexual behavior to be deemed right and acceptable in the eyes of God and the church. Those are two different issues.

Donald R. Fitzke
Rheems, P

'Act our way into feeling'

Few things on the Church of the Brethren national scene have heartened me as much as your September editorial, "Casting Out Fear." Thank you for your courage and integrity.

We do indeed need to acknowledge nd face down our fears in relation o our gay and lesbian sisters and rothers, and begin to act like the oving people of God we are called to e. Maybe, as Dan West used to each, we can even "act our way into eeling."

Fran Clemens Nyce
Westminster, Md.

Ve ask love from the church

want to thank you for your positive ditorial (September) about the ancing in the Southwind conference. I think you are to be ommended for confronting your homophobia-phobia." I wish more hristians would follow your examle and confront theirs. Of all the ay and lesbian Church of the rethren folks I know (and I am one f them), none of us want to destroy he church; we indeed just want to be oved and supported by the church hat means so much to us.

Beverly Brubaker
Gratis, Ohio

eaven up!

laughed when I read Marsha Veher's article "Communion Bread 01" [Brethrenings, June]. I cried vhen I read the response to that artile in the September issue.

We have become so tied to tradiion and structure that we miss the vhole point of what communion and hurch is all about. Sure it's a sacred ime. But the bread isn't sacred, nor loes it matter one bit how it's made. ne of the most meaningful love easts I ever participated in took lace 40 years ago. It was at breakast time, so the sacraments were weet rolls and orange juice. It was vonderful. The Holy Spirit filled the lace, and neither the Spirit nor nyone else cared at all if the bread neasured just so or had five or fifty ierces in it.

One Sunday morning several years ago our children, ranging in age from about five years to sixth grade, made the bread to be used for communion the next Sunday. Some of the pricks were awfully close together and others were awfully far apart. But it was perfect because our children made it, and because as they worked on it they gained an appreciation for service, for their roots, and for their God.

I for one am glad they (and we) weren't denied that beautiful experience because they weren't deacons and they wouldn't do it right.

Bickey Garber
Liberty Mills, Ind.

Before You Read These Stories . . .

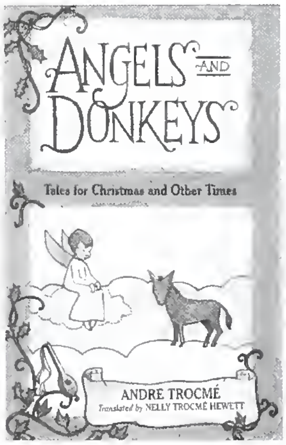
The stories in this collection were told by Pastor André Trocmé to the children of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon while France was under siege, occupied by Hitler's troops. The people of the area had formed an underground network for saving refugees, many of them Jewish children.

The rescuers did not know what their neighbors were doing. No one talked. Where did the people get their courage to risk their lives to save strangers? (The people of the Plateau are credited with helping nearly 5,000 refugees, about 3,500 of them Jewish, many of whom are still alive today.)

The stories in this book are part of that story. For **the courage to do what one knows one should do** is very often sparked by the memory of a story.

These original stories were told by Pastor Trocmé by the huge lighted tree on Christmas in the Protestant (Huguenot) church in that small mountain village, during the poverty and anxiety of wartime uncertainty. Everyone knew that death and betrayal surrounded them. Many of the themes in the stories are couched references to the courage one needs in such circumstances.

This marks the first appearance of these stories in English. Excellent for both children and adults. Great to read aloud.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POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Vice President for Institutional Advancement Manchester College. Manchester College invites nominations and applications for the position of Vice President for Institutional Advancement. Founded in 1989, Manchester is a small (1500 students), co-educational, residential college with a commitment to liberal education and pre-professional studies. Associated with the Church of the Brethren, Manchester College is guided by a strong sense of mission that focuses on a distinctive commitment to peace and justice and the preparation of students with both ability and conviction. Manchester is located in North Manchester, a community of 6200, located 30 miles southwest of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Manchester College is in the second year of a ten year, three-phase, $49 million comprehensive campaign ($29 Million in capital projects and endowments; $20 million in the annual fund). The past two years have been the most successful in the College's fund-raising history. A small, but strong and committed team is in place to support a new leader. The Vice President for Institutional Advancement reports directly to the President and serves in a key role in the College's senior management staff. The successful candidate will have significant experience and success as a fund-raiser, including responsibility for identifying, seeking, and closing major gifts. He or she will have demonstrated ability as a manager and skill at handling multiple priorities. Initiative, commitment to an educational mission like Manchester's, strong communication skills, and a sense of optimism and good humor are valued attributes. A bachelor's degree is expected; a master's degree is preferred. The position's salary will be competitive, with institutions of Manchester's mission and resources. Please send letters of nomination or interest, a detailed resume, and the names of three or more references (position related) to Parker G. Marden, President, Manchester College, 604 E. College Avenue, North Manchester, Indiana 46962. Full review of applications will begin on November 1, 1998 and continue until the position is filled. AA/EOE

The Young Center for the study of Anabaptist and Pietist groups at Elizabethtown College invites applications and nominations for Center Fellow Fall 1999, Spring 2000, Summer 1999 and 2000. Fellows typically spend one semester at the Young Center pursuing research related to the faith, history, and culture of Anabaptist and/or Pietist group(s). Letters of inquiry should describe the Fellow's proposed research activities and possible lecture, course offerings, or seminar topics. Include a vitae curriculum that details academic accomplishments. Send inquiries or nominations to: David B. Eller, Director, The Young Center, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA 17022. Phone (717)361-1470, Fax (717)361-1443, e-mail youngctr@acad.etown.edu

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TRAVEL

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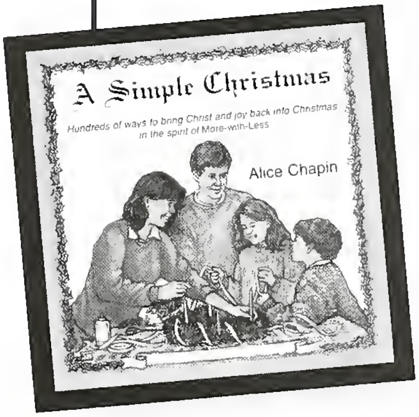
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Alice Chapin

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Herald Press

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Turning Points

New members

Bella Vista, Los Angeles, Calif.: Yanyse Belden, Patrick Escobar, Jessica Lorenzo, Dave Martin, Arcadio Morales, Falisha Rivera, Camille Romero
Carlisle, Pa.: Graham and Joan Mulholland, Todd and Shelly Nester
Curryville, Pa.: Nicholas Burket, Jerod Foor, Kellie Hinish, Kerrie Hinish, John S. Imler, Betty L. Imler, Christine Knepp, Jill Mellott, Brad Minielli, Stephanie Minielli
Fairview, Cordova, Md.: Madeline Morris, Casey Morris, Rheanna Morris
Fraternity, Winston-Salem, N.C.: Dena Griffin, Ronnie Kiser, Ed Wall, Mollie Wall
Harmony, Myersville, Md.: Tammy McFarland, Ruth Leatherman, Benjamin Tinney
ndian Creek, Harleysville, Pa.: John "Mike" Coleman, Carl Reber, Betty Reber, Christian Markley, Julie Markley, Rebecca Alderfer, Alicia Coale, Sherri McDonald-Coleman, David Slotter
Ligonier, Pa.: Dale and Jennifer Shawley
Marsh Creek, Gettysburg, Pa.: William Troup, Denise Troup
Nappanee, Ind.: Mark and Kelly Simpson
Skyridge, Kalamazoo, Mich.: Norman Slack, Greg Slough, Linda Richer
Venice, Fla.: Lois Kaskey
White Oak, Penryn, Pa.: Dusten Martin, Matthew Miller, Tom Stauffer, Marjorie Stauffer, Faith Heagy, Michael Shirk, Keri Copenhaver
University Park, Hyattsville, Md.: Ruth West

Wedding Anniversaries

Brandeberry, Floyd and Gladys, Goshen, Ind., 60
Brightbill, Marlin and Eunice, N. Manchester, Ind., 60
Dearing, Oliver and Ellen, New Lebanon, Ohio, 70
Detrick, Earnest and Elizabeth, N. Manchester, Ind., 60
Glisan, Samuel and Treva, Union Bridge, Md., 50
Graffious, Howard and Maude, Defiance, Pa., 50
Graham, Stanley and Helen, Rockford, Ill., 50
Hallman, George and Dorothy, Mont Clare, Pa., 60
Harmon, Tom and Norma, Clearwater, Fla., 50
Heindel, George W. and Ruby N., York, Pa., 60
Kercher, Robert and Hilda, Reading, Pa., 50
Labik, Yano and Mae, Oaks, Pa., 50
Love, Robert and Bernice, Pottstown, Pa., 60
Ober, Jay and Margaret, Manheim, Pa., 55
Ott, Ronald and Irene, Churubusco, Ind., 50
Reed, Lamar and Wilma, New Paris, Ind., 60
Smith, Don and Norma, Harleysville, Pa., 50
Smith, Roland and Floss, Phoenixville, Pa., 50
Teegarden, Robert and Lillian, Kansas City, Mo., 55
Yerger, Paul and Frances, Harleysville, Pa., 65
Ziegler, Lloyd and Esther, Trappe, Pa., 50

Deaths

Albrite, Lucille, 74, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 27
Baker, Bertha Ruth, 78, Fulks Run, Va., June 20
Baker, Elizabeth Catherine, 71, Timberville, Va., Aug. 4
Barkdoll, Marie Bricker, 83, Waynesboro, Pa., Sept. 7
Beeghly, Betty, 76, Oakland, Md., Sept. 4
Berg, Bessie M., 89, Maysville, W.Va., Sept. 4
Campbell, Andrew Charles, Jr., 70, Winston-Salem, N.C., Aug. 14
Cline, Lynwood, 90, Timberville, Va., Aug. 4
Cook, Olive Ardelia, 84, Dayton, Va., June 24
Craun, Helen Marie Root, 53, Weyers Cave, Va., June 24
Crist, Anna, 85, Harleysville, Pa., April 13
Custer, Millard "Pete" D., 83, Fulks Run, Va., Aug. 16
Dearing, J. Oliver, 89, New Lebanon, Ohio, Aug. 5
Delawder, Earl F., 83, Broadway, Va., July 17
Denver, Carl 78, Mount Storm, W.Va., July 4
Dolly, Dove, Dewey L., 35, Linville, Va., Aug. 11
Fifer, Fred, 88, Leonard, Mo., Aug. 17
Flora, Karl, 49, Centreville, Va., Aug. 31
Fox, George, Sr., 71, Spring City, Pa., Sept. 2
Fultz, Charles W., 57, Mount Solon, Va., July 21
Geib, Willis, 85, Manheim, Pa., April 14
Hamilton, Helen Faye-Moore Whitmire, 73, Virginia Beach, Va., July 25
Hoffman, Lois Snader, 80, Waynesboro, Pa., Sept. 15
Hollen, Francis A., 87, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 2
Howard, Lura, 85, Cando, N.D., Aug. 27
Kesner, Samuel L., 93, Mozer, W.Va., June 22
Lawson, Virginia M., 85, Staunton, Va., Aug. 26
Mathias, Virgil L., 95, Mathias, Va., July 31
McCoy, Elza, 85, Kendallville, Ind., July 12
McGuire, Faye, 67, Taylors Valley, Va., Sept. 7
Miller, Garland F., 86, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 7
Miller, James L., 83, Baker, W.Va., Aug. 11
Moats, Edward Albert, 71, McDowell, Va., June 9
Morgan, Vada, 84, Ligonier, Pa., April 20
Morris, Melvin Franklin, 71, Grottoes, Va., June 6
Mosbaugh, Hazel L., 82, Cicero, Ind., Aug. 30
Moyer, Ethel, 86, Harleysville, Pa., April 6
Moyers, Hobert R., 94, Harrisonburg, Va., June 26
Moyers, Melvin I., 77, Linville, Va., Sept. 3
Nesselrodt, Berlin James, 86, Keezletown, Va., Aug. 4
Pence, Edna W., 93, Bridgewater, Va., Sept. 2
Pittington, Lena M., 85, Keezletown, Va., Sept. 3
Plaugher, Anna Geraldine, 66, Harrisonburg, Va., July 14
Rickard, Pattie, 45, Strasburg, Va., Aug. 11
Riggleman, Jesse James, 87, Upper Tract, W.Va., July 22
Rohrer, Edith, 90, Manheim, Pa., Nov. 17, 1997
Secrist, Larry Wayne, 44, Linville, Va., Aug. 7
Seese, Esther, 86, Harleysville, Pa., July 6
Simmons, Forrest T., 86, Moyers, W.Va., June 6
Simmons, Lena, 83, Bridgewater, Va., July 11
Smith, Quentin, 63, Boynton Beach, Fla., June 2
Snodgrass, Mary, 77, Ligonier, Pa., March 3
Snyder, Elsie, 95, Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 4
Southerly, Gladys Mae, 67, Moorefield, W.Va., July 8
Stauffer, Sadie, 97, Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 7
Stickley, Walter, 77, Vienna, Va., May 24
Taylor, Mary Frances Shifflet, 89, Goods Mill, Va., June 16
Thompson, John Paul, 77, Edinburg, Va., July 22
Thompson, Mary Virginia Caricofe, 91, Harrisonburg, Va., July 26
Turner, Garner, 76, Broadway, Va., Aug. 8
Weaver, Franklin C., 90, New Oxford, Pa., Aug. 28
Weaver, Ruth Elizabeth Eagle, 87, Dayton, Va., Sept. 5
White, Joe, 76, Dayton, Ohio, Aug. 29
Wilkins, Delphia D. "Hun," 91, Baker, W.Va., July 22
Wine, Goldie W., 89, Lakeland, Fla., July 18
Wolf, Walter A., 87, New Oxford, Pa., Aug. 29
Wright, Charles L., Jr., 66, Verona, Va., Aug. 26

Pastoral Placements

Abe, James, from Kent, Ohio, to Akron, Ohio
Anspaugh, Eric, from Castine, Arcanum, Ohio, to Cincinnati Fellowship, Cincinnati, Ohio
Beutler, Kelly, to Liberty Mills, Ind.
Bollinger, Steven, from seminary to Salem, Englewood, Ohio
Button-Harrison, Mary Jane, from South Waterloo, Waterloo, Iowa, to Ivester, Grundy Center, Iowa
Coursen, Robert, to Woodworth, Youngstown, Ohio
Driver, Brent, from Waynesboro, Pa., to Sidney, Ohio
Dutka, Leon, from Bristol, Tenn., to Mountain Valley, Greeneville, Tenn.
Fackler, Jeff, from Goshen, Ind., to Pleasant Chapel, Ashley, Ind.
Funk, Keith, from East Chippewa, Orrville, Ohio, to Quinter, Kan.
Godfrey, Stanley L., to New Paris, Ind.
Hendricks, Joseph (Jodie), from Rocky Ford, Colo., to Meadow Branch, Westminster, Md.
Jones, R. Douglas, from Bassett, Va., to Green Hill, Salem, Va.
Kanagy, Curtiss, to Midway, Lebanon, Pa.
Martin-Adkins, Alice, from Hershey, Pa., to Washington City, Washington, D.C.
Meeks, Gary, from Deshler, Ohio, to Garden City, Kan.
Naff, Jerry, to Smith Mountain Lake, Moneta, Va.
Neuwirth, Dick, to Swan Creek, Wauseon, Ohio
Norris, Samuel Joseph, from Garden City, Kan., to Greenwood, Mountain Grove, Mo.
Pippen, Louise, to Elizabethtown, Pa.
Shelton, Harry, to Rocky Mount, Va.
Spangler, Keith, from New Haven, Sparta, N.C., to Boones Chapel, Snow Creek, Va.
Truitt, David, from United Methodist congregation to Woodbury, Pa., associate pastor
Tschetter, John, from W. Charleston, Tipp City, Ohio, to New Life Christian Fellowship, Mt. Pleasant, Mich.
Vroon, Robert, from West Shore, Enola, Pa., to Hempfield, E. Petersburg, Pa.
Whipple, Charles, from Hopewell, Va., to Mount Joy, Mt. Pleasant, Pa.

Licensings

Adkins, James, April 7, East Cocalico, Reamstown, Pa.
Allen, Paul P., June 13, Pleasant View, Lima, Ohio
Bean, Ruby Ann, Sept. 2, 1997, Drexel Hill, Pa.
Carson, James Hubert, Dec. 2, East Fairview, Manheim, Pa.
Earhart, David Lee, Dec. 2, East Fairview, Manheim, Pa.
Glasscock, John, July 31, Brooklyn, Iowa
Hollinger, Kathleen, Aug. 9, Acts Covenant, Lancaster, Pa.
Johnson, Daniel, Aug. 4, Schuylkill, Pine Grove, Pa.
Johnson, Jesse, Jan. 6, Mechanic Grove, Quarryville, Pa.
Johnson, Katherine, Jan. 17, Modesto, Calif.

Ordinations

Bentzel, Paul W., July 18, New Fairview, York, Pa.
Booth, Marilou Genereaux, April 19, N. County, San Marcos, Calif.
Brumbaugh, Alan E., June 6, Bellwood, Pa.
Godfrey, Richard, July 18, York Madison Ave., York, Pa.
Godfrey, Stanley Laverne, July 18, Codorus, Loganville, Pa.
Hankins, Steve, March 24, Constance, Hebron, Ky.
Hartman, Wayne, July 18, New Fairview, York, Pa.
Lake, Leslie, June 13, East Chippewa, Orrville, Ohio
Lambert, Linda, July 19, Thurmont, Md.
Leinauer, Pamela T., Nov. 8, Columbia United, Columbia, Md.
Longanecker, Kevin, Nov. 8, Zion Hill, Columbiana, Ohio
Martin, George H., July 18, Falling Spring, Shady Grove, Pa.
Princell, Pamela Sue, July 27, Anderson, Ind.
Singo, Tonya J., May 16, Center, Champion, Pa.
Statler, Dana Eugene, May 16, Lancaster, Pa.
Swick, Michael, May 16, Meyersdale, Pa.
Witmer, Nelson, July 18, Shanks, Greencastle, Pa.

Editorial

Silence, please

Each November I go with my friends to the monastery for a silent treatment. At St. Gregory's Abbey, Three Rivers, Mich., silence covers everything like snow at dawn. The silence, said one of the monks, is not merely the absence of sound but a reality in itself. St. Benedict had exhorted these monks to "diligently cultivate silence at all times," until it entered every aspect of their lives.

It doesn't take long at the monastery for a visitor to pick up a taste of this silence. Even the noisiest and most compulsive visitors get enough imposed quiet to notice that there is something different about the silent way. It isn't hurried. One November I watched a monk rake golden leaves. He raked slowly, one stroke at a time. I've never raked leaves slowly before, never raked without thinking if I hurry up I'll be done sooner. This monk seemed to have the attitude that if he didn't finish today he'd finish tomorrow, and if he didn't finish then it wouldn't matter much.

After vespers the church is darkened and we sit for a half hour in silent prayer. The last light of dusk filters through the skylights, just enough light to reveal from the shadows the hoods of monks' cassocks hiding their praying heads. I can pray better here than anywhere. Out of the quiet darkness of this sacred place silence enters my soul. I try to drink in enough of it to take with me into the non-November months of the year. Back at home when problems pile up and life becomes too much, I pull my hood up and soothe my head with the dark silence of St. Gregory's church.

Silence just is. We sit and enjoy it. We take a walk with silence as our companion.

A retreat at the monastery is for talking with friends on long walks in the woods and on the path around the lake. Over the years we've been through each others' divorces and job changes together, sharing struggles and joys. We spot deer and wild turkeys. Nobody told the honking geese that this is supposed to be a quiet place.

"Silence makes no demands," writes Father Andrew, the abbot at St. Gregory's. "Silence just is. We sit and enjoy it. We take a walk with silence as our companion. We begin to realize that other things just are. . . . A whole new world begins to open up to us, the same world we have always lived in but haven't seen before. We begin to notice that we have been in the habit of thinking of everything as something for us to use in some way. Silence frees us from making demands."

This doesn't come naturally. Silence doesn't sit well with me, which is to say I don't sit well. I usually operate with a list, a telephone, and a deadline. The more calls I make and receive and the more items I check off my list, the better off I am, and to my way of thinking, the better off the world is. But with silence there's no list, no phone, no deadline.

There are too many words in the world already, and here I go praising the worth of silence at great length! At least these are words chosen carefully, and they are not all of the words that can be written on the subject. Too many words obscure the truth rather than reveal it. Nobody knows what Ken Starr's evidence means because it has too many words. There were so many political messages nobody knew how to vote. E-mail makes it easy for us to write too many words to our friends. E-mail allows me to write the first thing that comes to my mind. But the last thing you want to know is the first thing that comes to my mind.

It consoles me to think that as an editor I not only add words to the world I eliminate many as well. To edit is to eliminate unnecessary words so that each one left tells. Some words disappear with the magic of the delete key; some never make it as far as the computer screen. Those whose words don't get published may call it censorship; call it providing silence. When the church attracts too much yammering, the Christian thing to do is to say a holy shut-up.

Silence isn't nothing. It's something. Doing silence is doing something which often accomplishes more than noise. Father Andrew writes, "What silence exposes in us is a chatterbox so filled with a running commentary on all our grandiose dreams, resentments, and criticisms of others that it leaves us no room inside for appreciating the reality of other people and the world around us. The self-importance which inflates both our virtues and our faults shrinks in the presence of silence."

And then, when the chatterbox stops, when unnecessary words are pared away, when the darkness of a church quiets our weary minds, then if we can listen well we can hear the voice of God. —Fletcher Farrar

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Sincerely greetings to all of you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. With the help of the Almighty Father. I hope you are all well. We are also fine here for the time being.

First of all I thank you for your visit. Our Headmistress has told us about the money you are sending us. We are very grateful and we are sure it will assist us in our problems, like buying text books, grinding food for us, buying sugar, exercise books, story books, shoes and socks. As you know we are poor. Some of us lost our parents and brothers during the war. Please continue to pray for peace.

The war has destroyed our land. Then antinove bombers booms every time in our places but with the help of God we have always been protected under his palms. May God be with you always in times of danger or sickness. May he help you to continue with that kind of spirit always.

Yours in Christ
Joana Aja

Blessed Bakhita Girls Primary School, Southern Sudan

Give a Gift that Gives a Future

Sudan: Partnership for Peace is a $238,000 three-year Global Food Crisis Fund initiative to support the people of Sudan. Along with assistance for the girls at Blessed Bakhita, the effort also supports a child feeding program in the displaced community of New Cush, a women's development initiative among refugees at Narus, and peace training at Kakuma Refugee Camp.

Become a partner with the people of southern Sudan.

$10	one month's support for a girl at Blessed Bakhita School
$25	one month's food supplement for a preschooler at New Cush
$50	materials for women's sewing kits at Narus
$120	a year's support for one girl at Blessed Bakhita School
$300	one person attending a peace training at Kakuma Refugee Camp

Special Christmas Opportunity!

Give a gift that gives a future to a friend or family member this Christmas—or make a family gift to the people of southern Sudan. Simply send a check to the Global Food Crisis Fund for one of the amounts listed above. If the check is received by December 10, a gift card will be sent to the donor by Dec. 20 with the name of the project noted. The card can then be given to the intended recipient as a Christmas gift. Send all gifts to the Global Food Crisis Fund, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120. For more information, contact the Office of Brethren Witness at the Church of the Brethren General Board (address above or 1-800-323-8039).

Religion News Service

NO SMALL WONDER

Familiar as it is, the story of Jesus' birth never loses its sense of wonder. How surprising that God should send the savior of the world as a baby lying in a manger.

Wonder not only surrounds the nativity and Jesus' earthly ministry but Christ's saving work today:

When partner churches in Nigeria and Sudan and the Dominican Republic flourish in the midst of adversity…

When 4,500 National Youth Conferencegoers are empowered by the Spirit to see with "Eyes of Faith"…

When a thousand youth and adults Take the Pledge not to kill but to fight for justice …

When Church of the Brethren members give upwards of a million dollars for disaster aid and hunger relief, as they have this year…

When Brethren show compassion to "the enemy" in North Korea, Sudan, Cuba, and Iraq …

When individuals and whole congregations come alive, as Jesus was, with the love of God …

In moments such as these the church becomes the place where God is *God-with-us*.

This Christmas, help others come to know the wonder of God's love. Let your joy be known. Give to the Christmas Achievement Offering.

CHRISTMAS ACHIEVEMENT OFFERING

Church of the Brethren General Board
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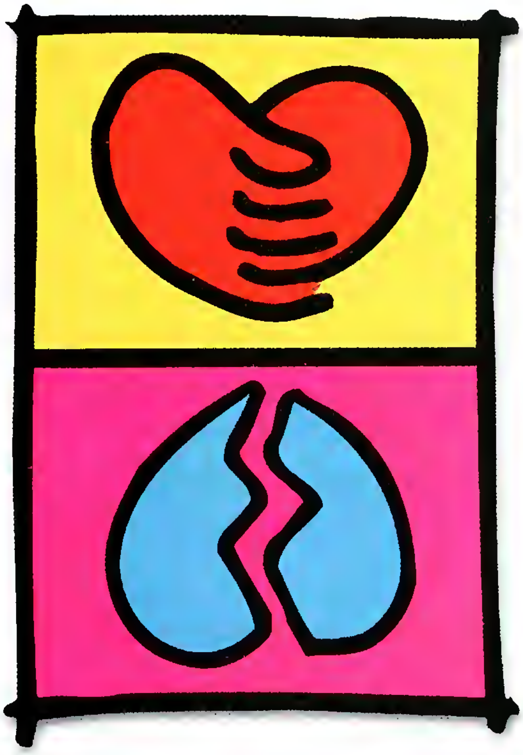
Church of the Brethren December 1998 www.brethren.org

Messenger

Peace on earth



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Vol. 147, No. 11 December 1998 www.brethren.org

Messenger

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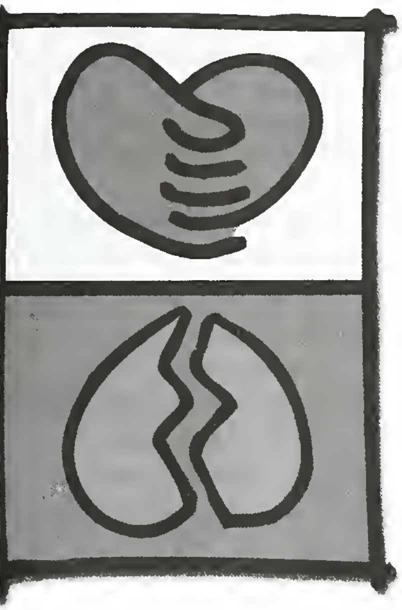

On the cover: This month's cover story is the World Council of Churches Program to Overcome Violence, and our cover features the logo of the program. According to the WCC, the mirror effect symbolizes similar but opposed negative and positive graphic images. A broken heart represents pain, the result of violence. Hands held in the shape of a heart represent the hope of being together in the face of troubles. The blue of the broken heart represents sadness and death, while he red of the hands-as-heart is the color of life. The yellow background symbolizes the warm relationship of sun and hope. For a message of hope this Christmas, turn to the cover story on page 11.

Coming next issue

The next issue of MESSENGER is the once-a-year two-month edition featuring articles on cultural diversity and minorities in the church. This January/February issue is scheduled to arrive in February.

Features

10 The trouble with Amos

In this Bible study, Church of the Brethren pastor Paula Bowser says that the message of the Old Testament prophet Amos is as relevant today as it was when it was written. And that's just part of the trouble!

11 Overcoming violence

Church of the Brethren leaders inspired the World Council of Churches to establish its Program to Overcome Violence, and a Church of the Brethren member, Sara Speicher, has been in Geneva, Switzerland working on the program for the past two years. Here Speicher describes the effort and its ecumenical challenge to the denomination which gave it birth.

17 Burned churches progress report

Three Church of the Brethren congregations had their faith tested by fire earlier this year. Here the pastor of each congregation reports on what has happened since. In each case, blessings were found in the ashes.

22 The unforgiving servant and us

In this article, Dale Aukerman teaches from a well-known parable that forgiveness is not only a personal obligation, but it has profound political dimensions as well.

25 1998 annual index

A handy listing of the names, subjects, and articles that have appeared in MESSENGER this year.

Departments

2 From the Publisher
3 In Touch
28 Letters
31 Turning Points
32 Editorial

From the Publisher

Recently I wrote a letter to my high school journalism teacher to thank her for the legacy she passed on to me. I'd never written a letter like that before. But she had popped into my mind a year ago, and I figured there was a reason. I believe the Spirit gives us impulses that we act upon too seldom. In this case, it took me almost a year to find her address and finally get the letter written.

I remember Mrs. Christie as a gray-haired, patrician woman who had total control of her class without ever raising her voice. She was a woman of quiet faith. She was stern, but kind.

The qualities that I remember about her are ones that have become important for me in my own communication work. I found myself wanting to tell her that. Though she has been retired for perhaps 20 years, I hope she is able to receive my letter of thanks for the gifts passed from teacher to student.

While I was reminiscing back 20-some years, I took a trip that sent me back 200 years. About the time I wrote that letter, I took part in the Shenandoah district conference, held in Bridgewater, Va. While I have passed briefly through that area several times before, this was my first time staying long enough to see glimpses into its history. For someone as recently Brethren as I (recent, that is, by Brethren standards), to ride past the Tunker House and John Kline's grave was a gratifying experience that brought the centuries together. And for someone living in Illinois, to see Brethren churches around every hill was almost culture shock.

Perhaps the historical connections were more powerful because I had just finished reading straight through the adult level of Let Our Joys Be Known, the new heritage curriculum from Brethren Press (which I recommend for everyone, whether in a Sunday school class or not). The material, which couples a story from our past written by Ken Shaffer and a commentary by Rick Gardner, is as celebrative as the hymn from which the title is taken. Each story illustrates a basic Brethren belief, and the lesson compels the reader to examine what that means for the individual and the church today, and into the future.

It's an exercise of value for every one of us. What beliefs from our past do we still cling to? What will we do with the spiritual gifts from our forebears? What should the Brethren be like today?

Our Brethren roots reach back to many places and to many people who lived out what they believed. Some of those people are still with us today. Let us thank them for their faithfulness, remember who we are, and greet the new year with the steadfastness of God, who is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Wendy McFadden

How to reach us

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To view the official Church of the Brethren Web site, point your browser to http://www.brethren.org.

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In Touch

The life and legacy of Florence Studebaker, beloved writer of many stories for children

If you remember yourself as a child squirming through long Sunday services, you may remember names like Oma Karn, Maude Trimmer, Myra Brooks Welch, Elisabeth Blough, Florence Studebaker, and others whose stories and poems were published in the weekly Church of the Brethren Sunday school papers. Parents let their children read these stories during church to keep them quiet, and besides, they knew that all of these writers were dedicated to helping their readers grow in the Christian life.

Florence Studebaker, among the youngest of this group of Brethren writers who wrote so prolifically during the middle decades of this century, died last summer at Brethren Hillcrest Homes in La Verne, Calif., at age 102. As a young woman she wanted to become a missionary. However, the Church of the Brethren missions board, believing her health to be too fragile, turned her down. In 1918 she married Paul Studebaker, a young minister-to-be from her home church, Mississinewa, near Muncie, Ind. After two years at Bethany Theological Seminary the couple entered the ministry with an enthusiasm they maintained for the next 50 years. Florence considered her writing an extension of the ministry.

In her book, *My Stories*, she tells about her first efforts in the early 1920s. With two little boys down with measles, she was prevented from participating in a special church program. "I felt a distinct loss, for there was so little opportunity to fellowship with other pastors and their wives. . . . So I sat down and wrote my first story and sent it to the publishing house in Elgin." How amazed she was to receive an acceptance and a small check! Greatly encouraged, she started a 13-chapter serial story based on her experiences on the frontier of northern California, where her father, D.M. Snider, had opened a lumber business in 1907. Although she had no training for writing beyond high school nor any typing lessons, she attacked the project with her customary zeal. Again she was overwhelmed with excitement when J. E. Miller, editor of *Our Young People*, sent an acceptance and remuneration, including a gentle note suggesting that further serial stories be confined to 10 chapters. The year was 1923.

Florence Studebaker in May, 1998

David Studebaker

By 1961 the Church of the Brethren had already published over 500 of her stories and articles, 28 or them being of the serial variety totaling 157 chapters, and she continued writing long after that. All this was accomplished while raising 4 children, mothering her orphaned half brother, and keeping up with an extremely active role in the church.

People often asked, "Where do you get ideas for your stories?" Some people didn't have to ask. One parishioner laughingly warned, "Be careful what you say to that Mrs. Studebaker. You'll end up in a story!" All of her writing grew out of her life experience and a vivid imagination. Growing up in a family of ten children provided much material. Remembering her brother accidentally swallowing shampoo instead of cough medicine brought on a children's story. A pastorate in Nappanee, Ind., offered an opportunity to learn about the Amish and spawned a serial story for young people.

If ever anyone earned the inscription on her tombstone, it was this fragile girl who became a strong woman, for she truly was a "Devoted Wife, Loving Mother, God's Faithful Servant." —Gwendolyn S. Miller

Gwendolyn S. Miller is a daughter of Florence Studebaker. A member of Modesto (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, she lives with her husband, Wayne, in Santa Cruz, Calif.

Henry Gibbel honored as Trustee of the Year

Henry H. Gibbel, chairman of the board of directors of Brethren Village retirement community, was named National Trustee of the Year Nov. 1 by the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging. A member of the Brethren Village board of directors for more than 30 years, Gibbel has provided leadership to help the Village grow from a small community of less than 200 to the modern, continuing care community of more than 800 residents that it is today. He is president and CEO of the Lititz (Pa.) Mutual Insurance Company, a trustee of Juniata College, a former member of the board of Bethany Theological Seminary, and a member of the Lititz Church of the Brethren.

Church helps school give peace a chance

Easton (Md.) Church of the Brethren spoke out for peace—twice—and by doing so made a powerful witness to the surrounding community.

Listing the virtues of respect, order, and discipline, the local school district voted several years ago to have the NJROTC (Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps) program in its schools. Easton Church of the Brethren opposed the program through a resolution, but to no avail.

But the church didn't stop there. When the opportunity presented itself to bring Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE), a conflict resolution, prejudice reduction, and violence prevention program, to the school district, Easton Church provided moral and monetary support to make it a reality.

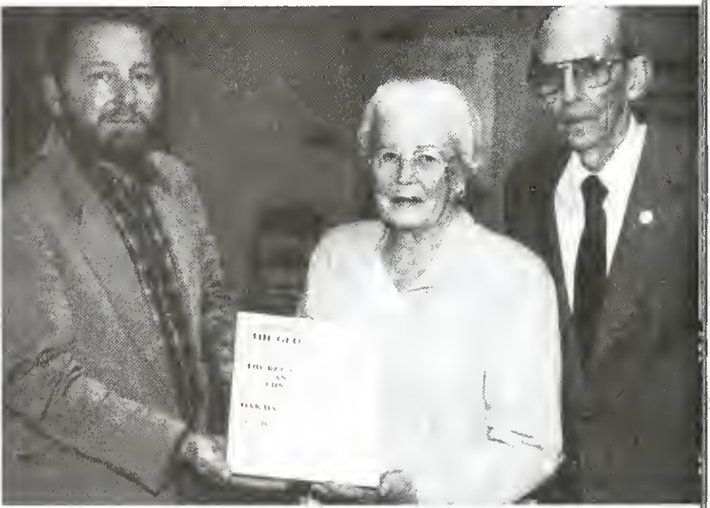
A high school principal contacted the Talbot Youth Council for Christ in search of a program that would break down barriers. Bruce Butler, member of the Easton congregation and part of the Talbot Youth Council, told him about SAVE, which Butler had heard about on a public television program.

In order for community members to understand the program, it was necessary to have Brooklyn, N.Y. students already involved in SAVE travel to Maryland to present workshops to community leaders and interested persons. Easton Church stepped forward to finance the introduction workshops. "No other church was united in support for what we were doing," Butler said.

Eventually there was an agreement to bring SAVE to the school district if money could be found to cover the expenses. Three years after the original NJROTC debate, a grant by the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council was awarded to start the program.

"SAVE gives a chance for students to see a perspective different from NJROTC. It gives students a peace-making option," Butler said.

—Karin Davidson



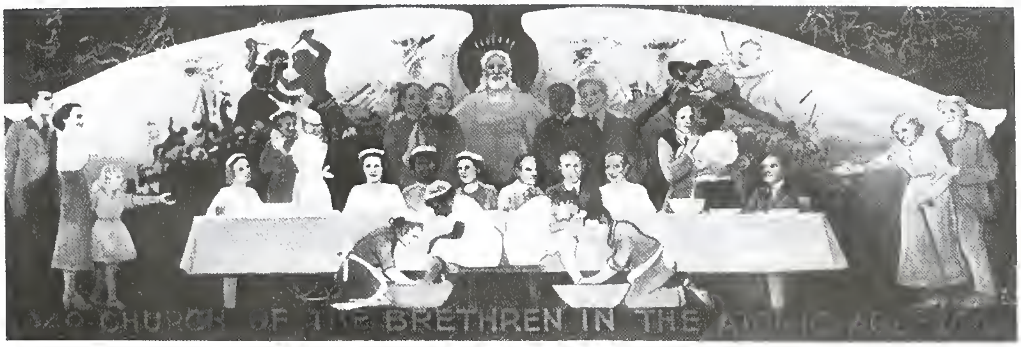
Ray Glick

Mervin Keeney, *left, Florena Duling and Galen Duling*

A classroom in Nigeria has friends in West Virginia

A plaque from the Oak Dale congregation, Scherr, W.Va. will hang in a classroom at the EYN Comprehensive Secondary School near Mubi, Nigeria following a presentation in October. Receiving the plaque from the congregation, Mervin Keeney, director of global mission partnerships for the General Board, addressed the group about mission work in Nigeria. Ray Glick, financial resource counselor for the General Board staff, said that Galen and Florena Duling of the Oak Dale church received special recognition at the event. The Dulings, who have spent their careers in the field of education in West Virginia, had made a special financial gift to fund the building of a classroom in Nigeria.

A mural history of the Church of the Brethren


CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN IN THE

Panel twelve 1949—2008
The Church of the Brethren in the Atomic Age

This twelfth and final panel *of the mural history on display at Camp Mack is titled "Church of the Brethren in the Atomic Age, 1949–2008."*

Festival will celebrate Camp Mack murals

The **first annual Alexander Mack Festival** is scheduled for Saturday, October 2, 1999, at Camp Alexander Mack, near Milford, Ind. Planners are publicizing the event early, hoping to draw Brethren from around the country. The festival will include demonstrations of early crafts, such as spinning, weaving, candle dipping, and the making of communion bread. There will be displays of historic items, such as old love feast tubs, and a variety of foods.

This first Alexander Mack Festival will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the twelve large murals depicting the history of the Church of the Brethren from its beginning in Germany in 1708 to the time of the murals' completion and dedication in June of 1949.

Artist Medford Neher worked on this pictorial history of the Church of the Brethren from 1944 to 1949. Six panels line each side of Quinter-Miller Auditorium stretching for about 90 feet on each side. Funds raised at this first Alexander Mack Festival are earmarked to assist in the commissioning of Margie Petry to paint a new mural to bring Church of the Brethren history up to date. —Phyllis Leininger

Remembered

Leland Lengel, 64, a professor at McPherson (Kan.) College for 36 years, suffered a fatal heart Oct. 28 while on his regular morning walk.

During his McPherson tenure, Lengel served the college in a multitude of leadership capacities. His work was published in a number of academic journals, he presented research at major history conferences, and he was recognized by several scholarly societies. Lengel was a member of McPherson (Kan.) Church of the Brethren.

•**Carl Simmons, Jr.,** minister and educator, died Oct. 9 in Baltimore, Md. at the age of 71. He held pastorates in St. John, Kan., Sacramento, Calif., Yakima, Wash., Albany and Klamath Falls, Ore., and Dundalk, Md. For eight years he worked in the anti-poverty program in the inner city of Baltimore, and he taught high school in Baltimore City for 17 years. He was a member of the Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren, Glen Arm, Md.

•**John D. Long** of New Oxford, Pa. died Nov. 6 at the age of 84. He retired in 1979 after 63 years as a Church of the Brethren pastor. He served a term as a member of the General Board. Among the churches he served were University Park Church, Wash., D.C.; Mack Memorial, Dayton, Ohio; and Lancaster, Pa. He preached his last sermon at the Lancaster church in September.

•**Norman Reber,** who as editor of the *Pennsylvania Farmer* from 1958 to 1974 campaigned for tax incentives to preserve farmland, died Nov. 6. He was 88. He was a lay minister in the New Fairview Church of the Brethren, near York, Pa.

The program he supported, called "clean and green," now protects some 112,000 acres by providing tax incentives for farmers to continue working their land while preserving open space from encroaching development.

Brethren and Butler Chapel work together

In mid-November eight members of the Butler Chapel AME Church Of Orangeburg, SC were working alongside five volunteers from Southeastern District, including district executive Don Spires, to rebuild homes in the tornado-ravaged Pratt City area of Birmingham, Ala.

Relationships established by Emergency Response Service Ministries volunteers who helped rebuild the Butler Chapel church building last year have grown through many subsequent visits and events. Now the two groups are working together on a disaster relief project.

"Working together creates a harmony of love and understanding that warms the soul," said Harold Hubbell, ERSM project director.

"In Touch" profiles Brethren we would like you to meet. Send story ideas and photos to "In Touch," Messenger, *1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120.*

News

Brethren medical team sent to Honduras following Mitch

The Church of the Brethren has mobilized its disaster response efforts in the wake of Hurricane Mitch by deploying a bilingual medical team to Honduras and by initiating and participating in a number of related response activities. Hurricane Mitch, which killed over 9,000 people and left over 1 million people homeless, has been called the western hemisphere's worst natural disaster of the century.

This storm closely followed Hurricane Georges, which struck hardest Caribbean countries such as Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. The Church of the Brethren General Board in October allocated $105,000 in Georges-related projects.

This 11-person medical team, sponsored by the General Board's Global Mission Partnerships office, is led by Yvonne Dilling, coordinator of the Church of the Brethren's Hurricane Mitch response efforts in Central America. It is an advance team that will be followed by several additional Church World Service-sponsored teams over the coming months.

According to Dilling, worldwide response to Hurricane Mitch has been overwhelming. Millions of dollars have been donated and tons of food and supplies have been sent. And yet at this time, only trained, bilingual volunteers are needed in the region as many critical needs have to be addressed quickly by people with labor and language skills who can make an immediate impact.

Such is the case with the medical team, which consists of 10 Church of the Brethren members. Traveling with Dilling were Don Parker, a Salem, Ohio, resident who serves on the Church of the Brethren General Board; and Lee Smith of South Bend, Ind. Others to go were Heidi Loomis of State College, Pa.; Ed Okeson-Ritchey of Rockford, Ill.; Oralea Pittman of Bellefontaine, Ohio; and Donna Raymond of West Boyleston, Mass., a member of the United Church of Christ.

Others to join the team were Mara Ramirez of Lancaster, Pa.; Debbie Okeson-Ritchey of Rockford, Ill.; Roxanne Cross from Michigan; and Ed Myer of Seattle, Wash.

In addition to assisting the team in

courtesy BVS

Members of Brethren Volunteer Service Orientation Unit 231, *which was held over three weeks in September and October at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md., pose for their official portrait. Row 1: Jenn Lucas and Troy Lucas. Row 2: Sue Grubb (staff), Janice Gibbel, Dawn Renea Nichols, Rudolf Klein, Matt Stauffer (staff), Tina Rieman (staff) and Karen Klein. Row 3: Kelli O'Harrow, Jodi Good, Holly White, Bridget Marchio, Heidi Miller, and Jackie Keller. Row 4: Jen Erickson, Marijke Swart, Isabelle Maeder, Rae Kissling, Susann Bernhold, Pam Genise, Martin Dorst, Samantha Morris, Rita Lippold, Kristen Grimes (staff), Christian Noll, Kim Stuckey, Annie Kaylor, Liz Martin, and Sebastian Kloppel.*

providing medical care, Dilling will consult with the Church of the Brethren's long-time Central American partners, including Honduras' Christian Commission for Development (CCD). These partner consultations will allow Dilling to determine the scale and scope of future relief efforts.

The medical team is the Church of the Brethren's response to an initial CCD request. "This medical team was the first thing they said they needed, along with some grants, so we jumped on that first," said Mervin Keeney, Global Mission Partnerships director. "That's part of our partnership. We received the request, we took it seriously, and we made it happen."

And that's only a small portion of the denomination's response to Hurricane Mitch. A Brethren study/learning group traveling to Nicaragua, led by Sue Wagner Fields of Bernville, Pa., was quickly transformed into a disaster response group that took medicines and money to the Church of the Brethren partner church, Mision Cristiana, when it departed for Central America on Nov. 9. The group also took money to purchase bean seeds, tools, and building supplies.

The Church of the Brethren General Board and Brethren churches and members have also been active stateside. A handful of Northern Ohio District churches raised about $20,000 to purchase medicines for use by the Brethren-sponsored medical team. Kathy Hess, a physician from Ashland, Ohio, and former chair of the General Board, was able to purchase the medicines from a local hospital at cost.

Hess wrote about her experience gathering medical supplies: "There was not sufficient time to get medications together through the usual channels. Therefore, Don Parker (also a physician from Ohio and a current General Board member) asked me to help him get medicines together for him to take. It has been absolutely overwhelming for me this week as I have had a front row seat to God's supplying all the needs for this trip! At this time [Nov. 14], I have received donations of $19,740 from 13 congregations within Northern Ohio District. God is so good!"

A group of Indiana Brethren, who have an ongoing relationship with the people of Mulukuku, Nicaragua, also raised $7,000 for relief efforts.

A grant of $25,000 from the Emergency Disaster Fund was approved Nov. 17, to be sent to Church World Service in support of its appeal for all countries affected by Hurricane Mitch — Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Another $24,000 was allocated to be used in Honduras by the medical team and by Church World Service and Action by Churches Together.

Miller Davis also requested a $20,000 EDF grant in response to an appeal from Interchurch Medical Assistance, the New Windsor, Md.-based medical relief agency of which the Church of the Brethren is a member. IMA has secured about $3 million in medicines from American pharmaceutical companies, but needs funds to ship the medicines to Central America.

Davis said the recent flurry of disaster response activity has left the Emergency Disaster Fund nearly depleted. Contributions are needed to enable ER/SM to respond to future disasters. Send donations to EDF, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin IL 60120.

ER/SM's New Windsor, Md.-based warehouse has maintained a frenetic pace, shipping thousands of pounds of material aid to Central America on behalf of Church World Service, the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Lutheran World Relief, and Interchurch Medical Assistance. Some 20,000 health kits; 7,500 layettes; 30,000 five-gallon water jugs; over 1,300 rolls of plastic sheeting; 9,000 blankets; and 150 bales of quilts; and 210 medicine boxes that contain 17 prescription and over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies were some of the items shipped.

Dilling said the Church of the Brethren will consider long-term disaster response projects once relief efforts shift from emergency response to rebuilding and repair efforts. In the meantime, Dilling said, there are ways that people in the United States can assist those affected by Hurricane Mitch through gifts of money and needed supplies, and by advocacy letter writing. Dilling said letters are needed requesting more US relief aid as well as forgiveness of Latin American debt.

Additional information on Church of the Brethren response to Hurricane Mitch is available by writing to mitchcob@juno.com or at the Church of the Brethren Web site at www.brethren.org. A toll-free phone line with a recorded update on disaster response was to be operational in late November. To reach that message, call ER/SM's office at 800-451-4407.

SERRV International draws a crowd *at its warehouse sale in early October. SERRV will occupy its present New Windsor facilities at least until its General Board loan is repaid.*

General Board action makes SERRV independent agency

After several hours of discussion, discernment, prayer, and executive session, the Church of the Brethren General Board Oct. 19 voted to spin off SERRV International, its New Windsor, Md.-based self-help handcrafts ministry, into a new, separate, Church of the Brethren-related nonprofit organization.

With a vote of 18-5 during its fall meetings at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, the Board agreed to allow the 49-year-old ministry to become an independent agency on Jan. 1.

"We believe this step will help SERRV maximize its ministry to the many current and future artisans who depend on this income for the basic necessities of life," said Board chair Mary Jo Flory-Steury.

SERRV, which was established by the General Board in 1949, is a $5 million-per-year business with assets of $1.2 million. It has agreements with thousands of artisans worldwide and currently sells the handcrafts of producers from about 30 countries. SERRV's goods are sold through gift shops and within 27 denominations, both through congregations and at conventions. The ministry mails out 300,000 catalogs each year.

The move toward SERRV's independence was formally begun as part of the Board's recent redesign process, when it sought to limit financial liability to the General Board and to determine whether SERRV would be able to function more effectively as a separate nonprofit corporation. After several years of study by two committees, the proposed separation received tentative approval this summer by Board members during their pre-Annual Conference meeting in Orlando, Fla.

Nevertheless, the Board's consideration of this business item in October was methodical and deliberate, spanning several hours. The process reflected what Board members and staff learned from a spirituality workshop they attended before the business meeting. Its focus was on how to integrate spirituality into the administration and governance of an organization. Occasional pauses for prayer, contemplation, and song peppered the discussion as Board members moved toward making their final decision.

The SERRV debate began with an overview by director Bob Chase and General Board treasurer Judy Keyser. After numerous questions from Board members and a 20-minute closed session, the Board approved the motion allowing for separation. Concern was raised over what the decision's impact could have on the future of the Brethren Service Center at New Windsor. Some asked whether SERRV could be granted the independence it needs to increase its competitiveness while remaining within the General Board structure.

A number of Board members used the analogy of a child growing up to state it is time for the ministry to be set free. Some members drew parallels between this action and the General Board's spinning off of Heifer Project International in the 1950s; HPI is now a much bigger, multinational, ecumenical ministry. Many also remarked, however, that it is their hope that SERRV will maintain its strong ties to the Church of the Brethren.

The first of three SERRV-related votes called for the ministry to be given its independence on Jan. 1. The second vote established a three-year loan of $650,000 plus interest, from the General Board to SERRV, with the expectation that SERRV will occupy its current warehouse and office building at the Brethren Service Center at least until the loan is repaid. The agreement also allows for the transfer of all SERRV assets to the new corporation, minus the loan. SERRV has been granted nonprofit status, a necessary step for independence.

To prepare for the possibility of

separation, all SERRV employees on Oct. 1 were given 90-day termination notices by the General Board. All SERRV employees, however, have reportedly been offered jobs in the new organization.

The Board's final vote pertaining to this issue established SERRV's first board of directors, a group of seven that will initially include four Church of the Brethren members. They are Charles Layman, Lori Sollenberger Knepp, Ivan Patterson, and Benton Rhoades. The three non-Brethren are Patti Crane, John Krieck, and Jacqui McDonald.

Board approves 1999 general fund budget of $5.2 million

The Board approved a balanced 1999 general fund budget of $5,218,000. The Board also approved the budgets of its self-supporting units, which are independent from the general fund.

For the current year general fund budget, Board reports through September show that congregational giving was about $88,000 behind the projected income of $2,349,590. Nevertheless, Board staff from the Treasurer's and Funding offices stated that the Board is projected to meet its budget at the end of the year with $224,000 of income over expense.

Why independence? *A General Board member quizzes SERRV director Bob Chase on why he advocates separating SERRV from the General Board.*

Nevin Dulabaum

In his farewell speech *to the General Board, Miller Davis, director of Emergency Response/Service Ministries, recalls high points of his 27 years of service. In the foreground are General Board Vice Chair Tracy Wenger Sadd and Chair Mary Jo Flory-Steury.*

For 1999, Brethren Press, with estimated sales of $1,018,700, is expected to have a $33,210 deficit but provided a detailed report of the factors affecting sales and the steps being taken to address the situation. MESSENGER magazine, with gross sales of $239,610, is expected to break even.

Emergency Response/Service Ministries, with income and service fees that exceed $1.25 million, is expected to conclude the year with $7,830 of income over expense. The Brethren Conference Center at New Windsor, with $624,310 in gross sales, is also expected to balance its budget.

In other business, the Board —

- received a proposed Ministerial Leadership paper, which is a rewrite of the 1986 Annual Conference "Licensed and Ordained Ministry" paper. Following the meetings of the Ministerial Advisory Council and Council of District Executives, this paper will be presented to the Board for approval in March. If adopted, it will be sent to Annual Conference delegates for consideration in July.
- approved a paper with recommendations pertaining to new church development, in response to inquiries from districts and pastors. This paper affirms the Board's dedication to new church development in conjunction with districts and congregations but states that the Board will no longer issue mortgages for new church buildings. The Board voted to establish an Emerging Churches Advisory Committee to develop policy and training for new church projects.
- decided that $345,828 in funds designated years ago by the Board for nine specialized purposes that no longer exist will be made available for new uses. The Leadership Team will decide on new uses for the funds according to the priorities of the Board's new design.

The trouble with Amos

BY PAULA BOWSER

Amos 5:18-24, Luke 10: 25-37

Amos spoke to a society very much like ours: wealthy, successful, religious persons who worked in and around the capital city of Samaria in the Northern Kingdom. God, says Amos, is like a mighty lion who is ready to roar and pounce. Amos starts off with criticism of surrounding nations, Damascus, Gaza, and Edom.

None of these nations is popular with the home crowd. If someone from Canada came to Washington and condemned Serbian atrocities, Saddam Hussein's use of mustard gas on the Kurds, and the lifestyles of Arab oil sheiks at the expense of their countrymen, few people would be upset.

Amos charges the neighboring states with ethnic cleansing, and gross violations of human rights, including the murder of unborn children. Amos cries out against slavery and howls against the terrors of war.

These observations would be tolerated in our capital city. Applauded, even. We could just congratulate ourselves that we are not like those awful people.

But then, Amos turns his laser lips on God's chosen people. The Lion of Judah will tear the heart out of Israel, he says. The so-called "chosen people" are chosen to model righteousness, to share the land with one another, practice jubilee by releasing slaves and leaving the gleanings for the poor. Israel is supposed be a light to the other nations — taking in the stranger and the refugee. But the gap between rich and poor has widened till it is a huge chasm.

The trouble with Amos is his insistence that we do not have to be directly involved in the process to be guilty. As the wealthiest people on earth, we can hire others to do the dirty work. Our sin is not wanting to know. Not wanting to know where cattle are raised for our veal and our Whoppers. Or where our garbage goes when we're done with it. Or about what it's like to try to make it as a person of color in a society that discriminates.

Our sin is in conspicuous consumption and self-absorbed ease. What will we pay for cosmetic surgery and designer perfumes while withholding funds that could fill the stomach of a hungry child? As long as our casualties are low, we don't want to know how many Iraqis go without medicine or food. We don't want to see the faces of those who were injured or killed by our smart bombs.

The trouble with Amos is that he is just too raw, too honest, and too close to home. Amos has the gall to point out that the whole time we're sinning away we're knee-deep in church. It is a painful fact that those in power — the haves —are very careful to enlist the rhetoric and outward forms of organized religion, to constantly make reference to divine favor, subtly implying that prosperity and military victory are the results, not of greed and ruthlessness, but of God's personal and corporate approval.

The trouble with Amos is that he says what every priest and preacher dreads: God is not necessarily on our side. God is not impressed with beautiful music or splendid productions or eloquent sermons in communities where racism and injustice are quietly taken for granted. Getting rid of sin is not as easy as parroting words and putting fat checks in the plate in the hopes that God will look the other way Sin is not only murder and grand larceny. Sin is inequity— the unequal distribution of food, of justice, of opportunity, of medical care.

The trouble with Amos is that his message is just as relevant in America today as it was in the capital city of Samaria so long ago.

The good thing about Amos is that his words not only indict, they inspire. There is an alternative to conspicuous consumption and rapacious opulence. The best thing Amos ever said was not about condemnation or divine vengeance or retribution. Amos is ultimately about something more. For Amos, the alternative to our self-indulgent lifestyles and our self-congratulatory worship is justice. And the words of Amos are on the lips of every true prophet. "Take away the noise of your songs and silence the great choirs in your wealthy houses of worship. I won't accept the fat offerings that come from plush pews — or cash that flows from gloved hands to gilded plates. But let justice come crashing down like the roar of a mighty waterfall, and let righteousness flow on like a never-ending stream."

We have choices to make about what we wear and what we drive and what we consume and invest. At its best, the Church of the Brethren asks us continually to examine those choices in light of a global economy, and a world where all of God's children are considered in our decisions.

We must remember the message of Jesus and Amos: that every person is my neighbor, especially those who are in need. My worship is only as valid as my willingness to minister to those in need.

Paula Bowser is pastor of Glade Valley Church of the Brethren, Walkersville, Md., and author of Jonah: God's Global Reach, *Brethre Press. Background for this article, which began as a sermon, came from Paul Merullo and Jud Siciliano, O.P., who provide research and reflections on the lectionary text for preachers through an online service called Preacher's Exchange.*

World Council of Churches

A December 1996 *peace festival in Colombia at which more than 7,000 people challenged the nation to peace.*

The World Council of Churches campaign for peace on earth

The program to overcome violence

A challenge by the Church of the Brethren. A challenge to the Church of the Brethren.

BY SARA SPEICHER

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth, peace to all in whom he delights (Luke 2:14).

'Tis the season to read and sing and announce anew the angel chorus as we make our practical and spiritual preparations for Christmas. The Prince of Peace is coming, has come, will come again. Yet even as we sing, we know that we are surrounded—in our homes, streets, nations, and world—by a rising tide of violence. Even within the churches we find the violence of silence, anger, racism, sexism, abuse.

As members of the Church of the Brethren, one of the historic peace churches, we hold that peace is central to Christ's message for the world and the church. While we have a tradition of service and witness for peace with justice that has sought to bridge the gap that seems to divide faith and reality, we also know what it means to hold this belief in the face of daily reminders of the tragedies of violence.

This witness has been a model and a challenge to the 20th-century ecumenical movement. Even before the official formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, the call from the historic peace churches to renounce any justification of war or violence was consistent and clear—and irritating to many of the denominations who held to a "just war" theory, or accepted the use of violence in struggles for justice and human rights.

Indeed, in their eyes, what the historic peace churches offered was primarily North American comfortable passive-ism, entirely inconsistent with the active struggle for survival and human dignity faced by millions around the world. At the same time, the historic peace churches, and the Brethren in particular, have been held in high esteem for their long history of service, simplicity, practicality, international assistance, and support of ecumenical efforts.

Many individuals and churches within the ecumenical movement have echoed the call held so strongly by the historic peace churches. Indeed, the delegates to the first World Council of Churches Assembly in Amsterdam declared that war is contrary to the will of God, and many within the ecumenical movement consider it a peace movement, working towards removing the role of religion as a factor of war. There have also been longstanding efforts, by Brethren and others, to establish a specific program in the WCC that would directly address issues of war and violence.

Several years ago, a new opportunity became available to express our peace convictions. In 1994, South African Methodist Bishop Stanley Mogoba, preaching at the opening worship of the WCC Central Committee meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, called on the World Council of Churches to establish a program to "combat" violence. In his sermon he noted that violence is found all over the world—and so are Christian congregations. He believed the WCC could play a critical role in linking global and local experience and action.

Some participants immediately saw these words as a program possibility, including two representatives of the historic peace churches who were members of the Central Committee— Donald Miller, then general secretary of the Church of the Brethren, and Barbara Bazett of the Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. Along with a WCC staff member, Elizabeth Salter, herself a Quaker, they made a proposal to the Unit Committee on Justice, Peace, and Creation, and lobbied delegates and staff. With the strong support of WCC general secretary Konrad Raiser, and moderator of the Unit Committee Margot Kässmann, it was unanimously approved to "establish a Program to Overcome Violence, with the purpose of challenging and transforming the global culture of violence in the direction of a culture of just peace."

The word "overcome" was first chosen as an attempt to avoid a seeming contradiction in the phrase "combat violence." But it has gradually come into a significance of its own, linked to Paul's letter to the Romans, "Overcome evil with good" (12:21).

Part of the recommendation from Central Committee in January 1994 that established the Program to Overcome Violence included a call for a consultation to define the pro-

Learning about being Brethren

I was born into the Church of the Brethren, raised in a congregation where my father had served as pastor, learned that all summer family holidays revolved around Annual Conference, and played the Brethren name game with the best of them. It took me about a week at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva, Switzerland, to declare, "I have never felt more Brethren in my life."

First it was the little things. After one week of daily worship, including four communion services, I cautiously asked the World Council of Churches staff person for music and worship, "Do you say the Lord's Prayer at *every* worship service?"

I sensed my "Brethrenness" in a series of ecumenical *faux pas*. I chuckled when someone referred to "His Holiness" because I thought it was a reference to a big ego—until I learned it was the form of address to the heads of the Orthodox churches. In my desire to show my openness to learn about other forms of worship, I arranged with a colleague to attend a Greek Orthodox Easter service. As we were settling the logistics, he said, "It starts at 11 and goes until 3 or 4, so I don't know if you want to stay for the entire time." I, in my eagerness to show my commitment, said, "Oh no, I'm prepared to stay all afternoon." To which he responded, "Afternoon? It starts at 11 at night."

Sara Speicher

I felt like walking around clutching Brethren identity packets—not for others, but for me. For I found that people associated with the World Council of Churches were very familiar with the Church of the Brethren, and sometimes more acquainted with our history and theological beliefs than I was. I don't have to explain our basic beliefs, as I often have to in the US, but instead field historical questions such as, "What relationship does the Church of the Brethren have to the Czech Brethren?" (Go look it up, as I had to.)

I also found, in my daily work and worship, a deeper understanding and appreciation of what sets the Brethren apart, an understanding that has reaffirmed my own faith and commitment to the church in which I was raised. Each time communion is offered, I consider our preparation of confession and renewal for faith and service. When creeds are said, and policies stated, I affirm our process for the discernment of the word in community. I've learned more about our history. I've shared more with others about our practices and beliefs.

Yet there are also times when I feel the Brethren have gram more fully. This consultation was held at Corrymeela, Northern Ireland, in June 1994 and was moderated by Lamar Gibble. The participants decided that the focus of the POV would be the networking of churches and other agencies who have had some success addressing the problem of violence. This recommendation was further refined by a consultation in Rio de Janeiro in April 1996, which called for a "Peace to the City" Campaign to give the Program to Overcome Violence further focus.

The 1996 Rio de Janeiro consultation involved grassroots peacemakers, representatives of WCC member churches, and WCC staff. The global campaign, "Peace to the City," was approved by Central Committee in September 1996 as the focus of the POV for the period leading up to the WCC Assembly in 1998. The Peace to the City Campaign lifts up creative models of reconciliation with the hope that these stories, ideas, and methodologies can teach and inspire all of us to do more to build peace in our own contexts. It focuses on seven cities around the world: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Boston, USA; Belfast, Northern Ireland; Colombo, Sri Lanka; Durban, South Africa; Kingston, Jamaica; and Suva, Fiji.

Beyond these symbolic seven cities, other cities, churches, peace organizations, and individuals have been invited to join and share their efforts and learn from others. Through the World Wide Web, e-mail, printed newsletters, books, and videos, the Campaign is creating and expanding a global network for peace.

In January 1997 I joined the Program to Overcome Violence and the Peace to the City Campaign as a historic peace church volunteer. The position, financially supported by Dutch and German Mennonites and the Mennonite Central Committee Europe Office, was itself a statement of the strong practical support the historic peace churches could offer this program of the WCC. I came, full of the knowledge of our history and tradition, proud of our peace position, and prepared to wait for

at the World Council of churches

something to learn from other churches. To my surprise and delight, I discovered that the local Lutheran church I attend practices feetwashing on Maundy Thursday. The feetwashing is held in the middle of the sanctuary, and people come forward as they feel led to have their feet washed and to wash another's. I watched a young boy in the back, standing on the pew and eagerly regarding what was going on. The boy then whispered urgently to his father and, eventually, leading his father by the hand, came up to participate himself in the feetwashing. With his father next to him, and with serious concentration, the boy carefully took basin and towel and washed another man's feet, and then with equally serious concentration, sat down to have his feet washed. The six-foot-six member who washed his feet lifted him straight up at the end for the kiss of peace, and the child was all smiles as he went back to his seat with his father.

What a lesson, I thought, both in showing how children lead us to the Kingdom of God, but also seeing life and joy restored to a familiar practice.

The increased sense of the uniqueness and value of one's own denomination is not unusual to those in the ecumenical movement. In talking to others who work at the Ecumenical Center, I have learned it is a common experience indeed, and one that demonstrates that ecumenism is not leading to a unified church, but rather reaffirms the value and necessity of a diversity of voices and traditions. We have found that by being actively engaged in the ecumenical movement, we open ourselves to developing and maintaining a clearer sense of identity and can become renewed and inspired to fulfill God's purpose for us in the world—both as individual churches and as Christians.

At the WCC Central Committee meeting in September 1997 I showed our Brethren identity packet to a German Mennonite attending the meetings. As I sat in the back of the vast conference hall, I saw him read each piece—then, at a query from his neighbor, pass each one to her, who passed them to her neighbor, and so on down their table. I watched people look at the photos and read the text, and thought of a different kind of evangelism—one based not on the desire to convert, but on the desire to be understood and to understand, a desire to work together, through our different traditions, to the glory of God and our belief in Jesus Christ.

I have now said the Lord's Prayer enough times to cover me for the rest of my Brethren liturgical life. Yet now, every time it is said, I listen to the low murmurs of the people, all of them reciting the prayer in their own languages. It is, in a sense, a reminder of Pentecost and the presence of the Holy Spirit who unites us in faith in spite of—perhaps because of—our differences.

—SARA SPEICHER

National Peace Council

The January 1996 *bombing of the Central Bank in Colombo, Sri Lanka.*

everyone else to just catch up and realize we have been right all along.

I have been humbled. In hearing the stories told through the Peace to the City Campaign, and witnessing the faith and efforts of individuals and groups who face incredible odds, I have realized that we have as much to learn about peacemaking from other churches and people as they can learn from us—perhaps more. I hold fast to our peace position, yet I also believe that the stories of the campaign partners in these cities around the world challenge us as much as our historic witness has challenged the ecumenical movement.

Boston

In Boston, a shooting and stabbing incident that took place inside the Morningstar Baptist Church in 1992 was a wake-up call to the faith community to address street violence that was no longer confined to the streets. Yet it was only a small group of pastors who decided that preaching, policy statements, demonstrations, and tougher laws could only go so far, and set out to walk the streets of the inner city at night to meet and talk to gang members and drug dealers where they are. They live and work in their neighborhoods, they listen to the youth, they act on what they hear and build trust. They demonstrate the love and care of God in giving these kids a sense of family, accountability, hope, and purpose.

Now called the Ten Point Coalition, these pastors have mobilized the churches, communities, police, businesses, schools, and city government to look at positive ways to reach the youth on the streets, in their world. Their combined efforts have brought a dramatic decrease in juvenile crime in Boston over the past six years that has drawn national and international attention, including the June 1, 1998, cover story of *Newsweek*. To be honest, the theology and style of these ministers may make us Brethren a little uncomfortable. But they show one way, as they say, "to put your feet where your faith is." They call us to be active—and proactive—and not wait for the time when we have to "take back" the streets. Rather, we should never give up responsibility for them. They call us to make peace—not just a nice theology, but a creative, energy-filled movement that speaks to the youth of today.

Rio de Janeiro

In Rio de Janeiro, a dynamic organization called Viva Rio was born in response to a series of tragedies that scandalized Brazil, including the killing of 8 children next to a downtown church and the massacre of 22 persons in one of the slums. Both of those atrocities were committed by the local police.

Viva Rio brings together peace activists, social workers, business leaders, school and university students, youth, elderly, religious leaders, the media and more. This has resulted in extensive and creative campaigns to raise public awareness of issues and specific projects involving community policing, job training, legal aid—and now an exciting project to build a national civilian and peace service for disadvantaged youth that already involves over 3,000 young people. Their work is effective and direct—and raises questions about appropriate

PRECISAMOS DE SEGURANÇA PARA AS NOSSAS FAMILIAS DEVOLVA NOS A CIDADE MARAVILHOSA
PAZ

Daniel Mattar

A peace March *in November 1994, at Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro.*

partnerships.

To find the people, the money, the space and the trust, Viva Rio works with anyone willing to assist. They work with evangelicals and Pentecostals, Presbyterians and Catholics, Buddhists and business owners, schools, media, and government. And they work with corporations like Shell, Xerox, and Coca Cola. Viva Rio argues that the violence is not selective, that it affects everyone and, therefore, everyone has to work for peace. They also argue that partnership on a project does not mean marriage for life, and it doesn't mean they agree with all the actions or beliefs of their partners.

If we want to consider ourselves peacemakers and want to address some of the serious problems found on the streets and around the world, we will have to partner with other churches and organizations. Who are we willing to work with? Do we work only with Christians? Or certain kinds of Christians? Only pacifists? Or to those holding a certain code of behavior? Who determines that code of behavior? Do we hold individuals and corporations to different codes of ethics? Where do we draw the line? How do we draw the line? Should a line be drawn?

Belfast

This year has seen dramatic progress in the pursuit of peace in Northern Ireland, and the media have given the politicians a high profile in the process. What has not been so well-recognized is the work of many organizations and thousands of individuals who over 30 years since "The Troubles" began have laid the foundation for dialog and trust that made the agreement and popular support of that agreement possible. One example is the Forthspring Methodist Church and its neighboring Catholic community, who are divided by a high wall that was built to reduce the violence between the Protestant and Catholic communities there. They opened their doors—literally through the wall—to serve as a place where people from both communities could meet and share and build understanding and trust.

Another example is Billy Mitchell, a former Protestant paramilitary commander who served a double life sentence for murder, and Liam Maskey, a former active member of the IRA who also served time in prison, who now work together to demonstrate the need for reconciliation and joint community development. These are people who took seriously the gospel call to be peacemakers and worked steadily and quietly and long to undergird a fragile political peace with a strong popular call for reconciliation. Perhaps we Brethren are more comfortable with this kind of steady, quiet effort, but it challenges us just the same. It makes us look at our own communities and see how we can build and strengthen peace and understanding among the entire Christian community, between different faiths and ethnic groups, and in civil society itself—so that conflict does not irrevocably divide us.

What the WCC is able to accomplish through the POV's Peace to the City Campaign at the practical level through networking, sharing resources, inspiring hope and expanding efforts at building peace, is indeed a cause for celebration, especially by the historic peace churches that have been so instrumental in its formation and maintenance. Yet there is a still deeper significance when one thinks of the centuries-old debate among Christian pacifists and advocates of a "just war" approach. Margot Kässmann, from the Evangelical Church in Germany and member of the Central and Executive Committees of the WCC, puts it into perspective:

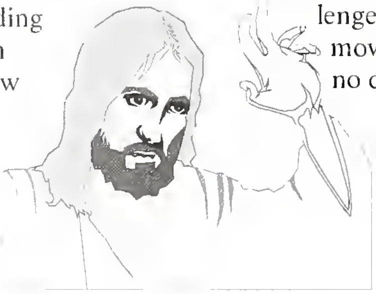
> A longing for the abolition of war and a debate about the possibility of a just revolution—a legitimate use of violence to advance the cause of justice—have historically been the two focal points of the discussion of violence within the ecumenical movement. The Program to Overcome Violence has a different point of reference, looking at the red thread of nonviolence and nonviolent action, and a much broader perspective, including the violence experienced in daily life. Thus it enters new ground. To discover the power of nonviolence in international conflict, in the struggle for justice and in daily life might free us for new creativity and a fresh look at history (*Overcoming Violence*, WCC Risk Book Series, 1998).

Through the Program to Overcome Violence, nonviolence, not violence, is the frame of reference in ecumenical dialog on the nature of the church and its theological foundations. The significance of this debate cannot be underestimated, even if the road ahead is still long and difficult. Nor can we underestimate the power a small group of Christians who call themselves Brethren, Mennonite, or Quaker, have on international Christian dialog and action.

There is no doubt that the witness of the historic peace churches is a major influence and challenge to the ecumenical movement. There is also no doubt that we are also challenged by the realities of this world and the need to be actively engaged in the witness for peace and justice. Indeed, the challenge for us to remain active in this vital ecumenical dialog and action is stronger than ever. The worldwide ecumenical movement is now perhaps more open to the witness of the historic peace churches, and through increased prayer, involvement, and financial support, we can demonstrate that our concern for peace is not just a nice historical footnote, but a vibrant–and practical–part of our faith.

As we sing our carols this season, and celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace, let us also re-examine how we are working around this world to overcome a culture of violence with a culture of peace.

Sara Speicher is a member of the Church of the Brethren and currently serves as program assistant to the World Council of Churches' Program to Overcome Violence in Geneva, Switzerland. In January 1999 she will begin a new position with the WCC as Cluster Communications Officer.



Brethrening

Radiation treatment

Ellen Gasaway, a member of First Church of the Brethren, Springfield, Ill., wrote this to her friend and fellow church member Jan, who was heading to the hospital to begin radiation treatments for breast cancer:

God's love radiates throughout our lives
it illuminates our darkness
it calms our fears
it finds its way into walls of hatred and fortresses of prejudice
and begins to touch those who need His transforming love.

God's love radiates from His people
when they gather
they shine on one another
happy to be in each other's company
joyful in the presence of the Lord
He reaches out through those who know Him to those who need to know Him.

God's love radiates all around us
in the golden colors of a fall day
in sunshine sparkling in a puddle or pond
in the warm, bright colors of spring
and the clean crisp brightness of a fresh snow.
Nature is filled with reminders and reflections of God's love for us.

God's love radiates from you
reaching out to others in so many ways
in the wonderful, whimsical cards you send
in your laughter
in your honesty, and your willingness to share your feelings.
God's love shows in you as you change, led by His loving Spirit.

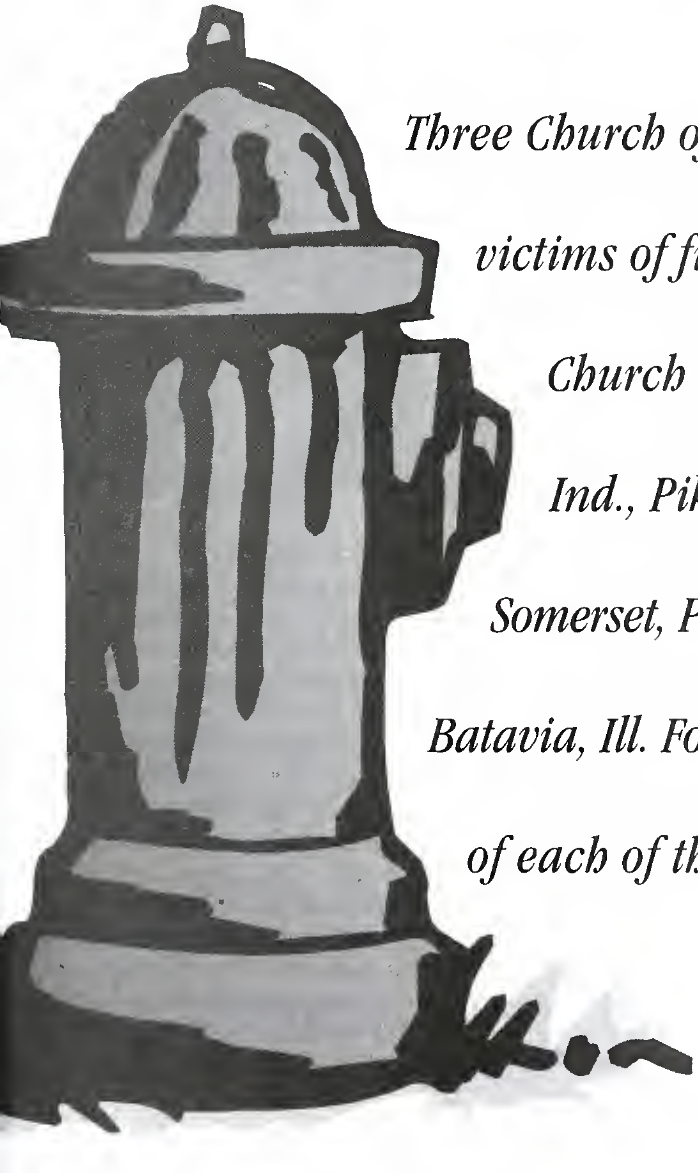
God gives each of us a radiation "treatment" every day.
He blasts us with His love as soon as we open our eyes, and bombards us with grace and mercy throughout our day.
The rays of His love are powerful, and they have side effects:
Love and joy, and hope, and forgiveness, and peace.

When you start your radiation treatment today, remember:
You've already *had* one! —Ellen Gasaway

MESSENGER *would like to publish other short, colorful, humorous or poignant stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submission to* MESSENGER, *1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at ffarrar_gb@brethren.org.*

Fired up!

Follow up reports from the three congregations whose faith was tested by fire



Three Church of the Brethren congregations were victims of fire earlier this year — Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind., Pike Run Church of the Brethren, near Somerset, Pa., and Faith Church of the Brethren, Batavia, Ill. Following are updates from the pastor of each of the congregations.

Nevin Dulabaum

Love in action

Erin Matteson, Faith Church of the Brethren, Batavia, Ill.

It seems unbelievable that this month has marked seven months since the March 2 fire at Faith Church. And yet we have been able to accomplish so much during that time. We assembled a building committee, worked with Mutual Aid Association to secure a contractor, named a "volunteer coordinator," and began work on a vast number of projects.

Since about April, we have cleaned, scrubbed, and scrubbed again soot and ash from walls and rooms. We have painted much of our downstairs and made some choices on carpeting and linoleum. We have ordered pew cushions and a pulpit and lectern. We have decided on doors and lighting and stained glass that needed replacing. And we continue to work on sound system choices, sanctuary doors, entryway flooring, nursery trimmings, and other contents needs.

The God who promises presence and peace has been so very present, particularly in the folks who have surrounded us with money, prayers, and a lot of working hands. Lanark (Ill.) Church of the Brethren even let us deliver our soot-ridden pews in a trailer and then cleaned and refinished them all! What a gift!

I could not say enough about how many ways God has moved us, witnessed to us and allowed us the opportunity to provide growth and change for others as well. From Habitat for Humanity, to young men who needed to do community service, to community folks who read about our tragedy in the newspaper and desired to come over to help, to Brethren from any number of churches, to many folks from other nearby churches, to people from Mutual Aid driving all the way from Kansas. We have experienced love in action — hands aplenty — scrubbing and painting alongside us.

Although I would never wish a fire on anyone, it is a powerful experience to live through this strange cyclical wonder of grieving, great joy and thanksgiving, discouragement, hope, surprise, and presence. It has changed all of us at Faith Church. We are much more aware of the district's and the denomination's care for us as a sister church. We are much more aware of our place in the community, and of the other churches' great willingness to support us. We are more aware and thankful of people's desire to be about service. Hallelujah!

As we continue our work and eagerly pray for the contractor to tell us we are close to getting a date to "go home," as a pastor I cannot help but to look ahead a bit for us as a congregation and ask, "What will we take from all this? And what will we give back to the community?" And I have many thoughts.

We at Faith Church have come so far. Some days the cup has seemed half full. And others it has seemed half-empty. But things are indeed coming together and finally we feel like we can see the scope of the remaining project — the "light at the end of the tunnel" is in sight. We cannot express enough gratitude for the denomination's support.

Yet this chapter in our life is hardly complete. We do have further to go, and keep going we must! We still definitely need all the support we can find in the weeks ahead. Please, keep us in your heart, mind, and prayers especially over the next two months. Do not forget us.

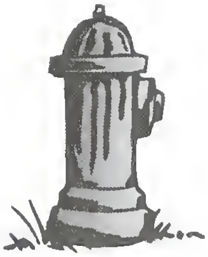
Worth Weller

Refined by fire

Susan Boyer, Manchester Church of the Brethren, North Manchester, Ind.

Much has happened in the life of the Manchester Church of the Brethren since our building burned on Jan. 7. If you travel through North Manchester you will still see the burned shell of the church. It is a monument to the destruction we have suffered. But it does not witness to the amazing things that have happened in the last eight months.

We have not moved urgently but we have moved deliberately. We are aware as a congregation that if we



move too fast we may have to begin the process over again. So we have tried to think quickly but with consideration of our whole church body. The first month after the fire we focused on the immediate concerns: Where will we meet for worship? How will we have Sunday school? What will Love Feast look like?

We then moved on to envisioning questions: What does it mean to be the Manchester Church of the Brethren in our community? Which of our neighbors are not being loved? How can we show them God's love?

Our next step was the question of location: Should we stay and build on the same site or should we move to a new location? On Sept. 20 we took a vote that enables us to buy 25.5 acres on State Road 13 and build there.

Now we are heavily into questions of building design. We have hired a designer/builder and an architect. We are going through a process of receiving input from the congregation on specific ministry areas of the building, such as worship, education, and fellowship.

Those are the deliberate steps we have taken in this process toward a new building. But there are many other unplanned things that have just happened by the grace of God.

We have been overwhelmed with the many ways we have been loved and supported by people within our denomination and outside it. Those contacts are too numerous to mention. But I do want to lift up some amazing ways we have deepened relationships.

Immediately after the fire, Manchester College jumped in with offers of assistance. College representatives helped us deal with the media and offered us the use of their auditorium for worship. We meet there every Sunday and often during other times of the week. It is a generous gift and is given with such hospitality that we abound with gratitude toward the college. Timbercrest Home offered us the use of its facilities for events like choir rehearsals, weekly meetings, women's relief sewing, and funeral dinners. Without these two sister institutions we would not be able to function with such ease.

The first Sunday that we were without a building was the Sunday of Butler Chapel AME church's dedication of its new facility in Orangeburg, S.C. Butler Chapel is the church that was burned by arson and for which the Church of the Brethren Emergency Response/Service Ministries coordinated the rebuilding. Several people from our congregation, including our entire youth group, helped rebuild their church after their fire. On Jan. 11, as Butler Chapel dedicated its new building, an offering of $3,000 was collected there to help us rebuild. In August, Butler Chapel members traveled from South Carolina to Indiana and performed a benefit concert for us. None of us would have guessed that when we traveled to South Carolina to help them that they would someday travel to Indiana to help us.

We also have a sister relationship with Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel of San Salvador, El Salvador [See "Disaster response with a difference," October]. It is a partnership we have developed over many years. They also sent us money, but more importantly a deep friendship filled with prayer.

Another sister relationship we have developed because of the fire is a kinship with the First Brethren Church of North Manchester. The feelings between our two churches had been difficult and strained in the past. Because of the fire we have begun to love each other again. From the middle of January through Easter, a different person in their congregation prayed for us every day for 15 minutes. Since we have no building, they invited us to join them this past summer for a joint Vacation Bible School. We kicked off that event by having a joint Sunday morning worship service. Without the fire this never would have happened. It is amazing how tragedy unites us.

A priest of a Catholic parish in Fort Wayne called me the week after our fire. The church he serves had burned to the ground several years before. He said to me, "Someday you will thank God for the fire and see it as a blessing." At the time I thought he was a bit crazy. I think I will always see the fire as a tragedy. I can't imagine ever forgetting the intense grief I felt watching the flames destroy a place that was sacred for me.

However, I have seen the blessings that have grown out of our disaster. In some ways we have been refined by fire. We ask more important questions and we seek more relevant and divine answers. Our attendance is up substantially. We know just how surrounded we are by God's presence and the love of our brothers and sisters in the faith. We don't take the simple things in life for granted anymore. We dream in more creative ways. We know the church is not a building but the people who love Jesus. We know in a new way that we are not in control.

But most importantly, the tag line for our denomination, "Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together." is more than just a tag line. It is now a way of life.

Nevin Dulabaum

Building the people church

Barry Conn, Pike Run Church of the Brethren, Somerset, Pa.

I am sure it was a great love for the Lord and a lot of sweat that built the first Pike Run Church of the Brethren. That was back in 1914. It was a time when neighbors helped neighbors and when a church relied on its members. They couldn't run to a contractor to oversee the building of the church. They didn't run to the local lumber supply store whenever and for whatever was needed. The first members of the Pike Run church faced a great challenge as they built this small country church.

The Pike Run congregation will soon have a new building because of an act of selfishness and hatred. As a congregation, we do not dwell on the act. We do not have hatred growing in our hearts for the person or people who caused this loss. We are only looking to the future and now, more than ever, with great excitement. The only way we can look to the future with excitement is because of the love of others.

In today's fast-paced world we find our lives busier than ever. This was one of the problems when it came to building the new church because the only way we could rebuild was by the efforts of others — in the form of money that was donated, from Church of the Brethren disaster relief, from Middle Pennsylvania District volunteers who gave many hours of help, and the countless others who came day after day.

The phone still rings with people asking about the church; money is still coming in. I cannot describe the love that has been shown to us. It is this love and encouragement that has kept us going.

The congregation designed and planned the new building. We went through the red tape with the advice of others who had already been through the building process. But when the actual building began, the community was there to help.

It is amazing to think that we as a congregation broke ground on May 31 and now the building is nearing completion.

I vividly remember the first day we

Brethrening

The unexpected Christmas gift

At 8:15 Christmas Eve 1997, I extinguished my candle and moved to the lobby to greet the family of faith, both exhilarated and exhausted! It had been a traditionally hectic Advent season, and though the candlelight service that evening had been especially beautiful and moving, I felt completely drained of all creative energy. Sunday was just a few days away and I still hadn't decided how to preach my post-Christmas Sunday morning sermon.

Weeks before, I had announced the title for that sermon as "Shepherds and Kings," but for some reason, no thread of purpose seemed to pull that message together, though I had thought and prayed over it for some time. I put aside thoughts of that service as I greeted folks from my congregation, and then went home to celebrate Christmas with my family.

At 9 p.m. Christmas night I went to bed completely exhausted. "How am I going to preach that message, Lord?" I prayed. Mentally, I began to think through the notes I had made. I had read an interesting article about the shepherds who were the outcasts of society, the ones looked down upon and kept apart in Jesus' day. The kings, on the other hand, were the well-educated, the rich elite. To them went the laurels of the scholarly. As I thought about the shepherds and kings, I began to think about how we still separate people into groups today and yet, how we are still all welcome and equal in the eyes of Jesus. I thought then of an old poem written from the perspective of a poor black woman called "A Christmas Lullaby," which my mother read to us every year on Christmas Eve. In it was a phrase. . . "Jesus, He just love everybody no matter who they be/ white or black, rich or poor, just like you and me." And slowly the theme for my sermon began to take shape.

The next day, I wrote that line from that old poem at the top of Sunday's bulletin. In my Christmas file, I located a copy of "A Christmas Lullaby" for the children's story. And I wrote a sermon about the love of Jesus that is so welcoming to everybody, and challenged the congregation to look at other people with the loving eyes of Jesus, one who sees no prejudice.

That Sunday morning the church lobby was full before worship. Over to the side I noticed a man standing whom I had not met before. When I introduced myself to him I said, "I don't think we have met."

started. A carload of men came from Middle Pennsylvania District to volunteer; the footer was dug and poured; the first blocks were laid after much thought and measurement. I was further impressed later that day when a car stopped and two young men, ages 18 and 21, got out. They asked if this was the Pike Run church. "Yes it is," we said. They proceeded to help us for a few hours, having traveled from West Virginia just to volunteer. What a feeling of love that remains in my mind and heart!

As I look at this bigger building, I think how we have been taught many valuable lessons. The first lesson is the importance of faith. Our faith in God has pulled us through this situation. It kept us together as we began to strain during the building process. The second lesson is one of need. We should focus on the needs of others. We found ourselves with a great need. Today we can say our need has been met. Now I hope and pray that after our church is completed, we as a congregation and as individuals will look closely at the needs of others. We need to be just as willing to spend our time, materials, and energy as the countless others who have helped us.

I really think building a church can be one of the most challenging times in the life of a congregation. Now, nearing the end, we probably have learned many valuable lessons — on faith, on planning, on building, on Christian love. I pray no one forgets what we learned.

The new Pike Run church will have classrooms; the old one didn't. The fellowship hall will be big; the old one was small. The new sanctuary will be larger, with plenty of room to grow. Overall, the new Pike Run church will be a bigger, more beautiful, and better building. Now the congregation has the opportunity to reach out to the community and invite them to worship to learn all about Christ. I hope the congregation puts forth the same effort in building the people church as the many people put forth in building the building church.

Sometime in the near future the church will be dedicated to God and his glory, making it his house. At that time I pray that each member will rededicate themselves to this greater ministry. The Pike Run church has been given a second chance because of Christian love and kindness. Praise God his love is alive in his people. I know it is, because I have felt it firsthand.

"We couldn't have met before," he said in somewhat of a gruff voice. "This is the first time I've ever been in this church." He said his name was Jim Dunham. In the echoes of my mind, a little voice said, "Don't forget that name."

Worship went well. We sang Christmas songs, shared, prayed, the children listened to that old poem written by a black woman in the 1940s, and I preached about the gift of love replacing the cloak of prejudice.

And then during the singing of the hymn I looked up to see Jim Dunham making his way down the aisle. He came to the pulpit and said, "I'd like to speak to your congregation when we're through singing." And so at the end of the hymn I said to the people, "We have a visitor with us who would like to share something." Jim came forward and asked the people to be seated.

He said when he came to worship the first thing he noticed was that sentence at the top of the bulletin about Jesus just loving everybody and he thought "yes that is right." And then he said he heard the pastor say in her sermon that we too should love everybody. "Now," he went on to say, "I work with a lot of black people and I always try to be really nice and accepting of everyone, but my co-workers make fun of me. They say, 'That Jim Dunham, he's really a black man in white man's skin.' Now," he said, "after being in this service of worship, I knew there was something I must do." And then he sang "Sweet Little Holy Child" a cappella, so beautifully that it rang in the stillness of the morning air. It was an unexpected Christmas gift for our entire congregation to share.

After church I asked him where he was from. "Ohio," he said. He went on to tell me that his father-in-law had relatives buried in our cemetery and wanted to research the family history. He had insisted they come *this Sunday* to do it. Then he said, "I haven't been in church for worship in about five years and I couldn't figure out why we had to be *here* in *this service, on this Sunday.* Now I know. God wanted to speak to my heart and He had something for me to do in return!"

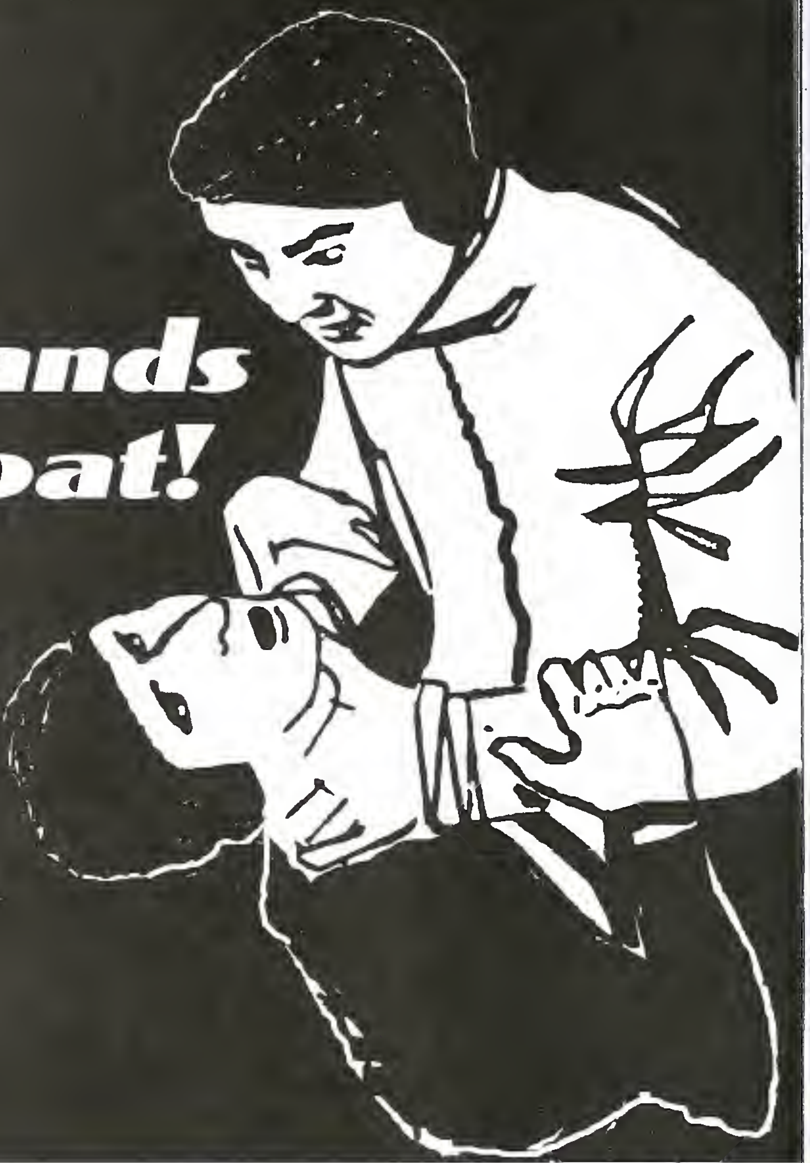
With tears in my eyes, I thought, "And I didn't know how to preach that sermon until God's Spirit touched my heart with an unusual Christmas message intended to reach deep into the soul of a sojourner in our midst."

—Jan Custer, pastor, Huntsdale Church of the Brethren, Carlisle, Pa.

MESSENGER *would like to publish other short, colorful, humorous or poignant stories of real-life incidents involving Brethren. Please send your submission to* MESSENGER, *1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120-1694 or e-mail to the editor at ffarrar_gb@brethren.org.*

Get your hands off his throat!

Political implications of the parable of the unforgiving servant.



BY DALE AUKERMAN

Through much of the history of the Church of the Brethren there was the widespread practice of reading Matthew 18 to persons who were about to be baptized. The chapter was seen as containing teachings of Jesus that are crucially important for Christian living. It closes with a familiar parable told in response to Peter's inquiry about how often he should forgive someone.

A king "wished to settle accounts with his servants." One fellow was brought in who owed him something like $10,000,000. The lord ordered that this servant, his family, and whatever possessions he had be auctioned off so that at least a small portion of the debt could be recovered. The servant fell on his knees and begged for more time to get the needed sum together. The lord was moved to take pity on the man; he knew that the amount owed was far beyond the man's ability to repay, and he simply forgave him the $10,000,000 debt.

But as the man was walking out of the meeting with his lord, he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him $20. He seized him by the throat and shouted, "Pay what you owe." The fellow servant fell on his knees and pleaded to be given more time. But his creditor refused, took him off, and had him thrown into prison till he could repay the debt—an unlikely prospect. The man who had not been prosecuted by his lord for the debt turned as prosecutor on his fellow servant.

But other servants had seen the treatment given the man and what he did in turn. They told their lord, who then summoned the man again and told him, "You wicked servant! I forgave you all the debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" In anger the Lord had him thrown into prison till he would be able to repay the $10,000,000—an extremely unlikely prospect. The teaching closes with the stark warning, "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

We do well to return to the parable again and again. With that huge sum Jesus pictures our human condition before God. In terms of what we have done wrong, each of us is faced with far more than we can possibly come up with to make things right with God. The only hope for us is that God will forgive what is totally beyond our ability to make right. The outrageous behavior of the unforgiving servant helps us to see how preposterous and spiritually perilous it is when we refuse to forgive someone else.

The implications of the parable for our personal relationships are clear and vitally important. But the parable has another range of implications that is hardly ever recognized; it speaks very directly to political attitudes that shape American society and the world. There are hard-line attitudes that constitute the direct equivalent of seizing the fellow servant by the throat and demanding full payment. Such attitudes are especially outrageous when they are based in hard-line religion. For then there is the clear sequence: taking the forgiveness of God for a vast accumulated debt, but refusing to live out forgiveness toward others.

A main impetus in the politics of this country is the drive to be as tough as possible on criminals. Violence and crime are huge problems, and the response which seems to have the widest appeal is that of coming down with vindictive retribution on those who get caught. The US has the highest incarceration rate of any industrialized country. Prisons are less and less oriented toward rehabilitation and more and more oriented toward harsh punishment.

The surging drive to be tough on criminals is a direct equivalent of the man's choking his fellow servant in the parable. Weighty practical objections can be raised against making very tough treatment of criminals a cornerstone of society. But if we listen to Jesus and consider the parable, there is a still more urgent objection.

We are not the upright citizens who righteously demand the punishment of others. Even if it is very much in secret, we have the $10,000,000 debt accumulated by our sinning against God. A society does need to deal with offenders. But our attitudes toward those who have been convicted of criminal behavior should be shaped by the recognition that we ourselves are totally dependent on God's mercy for the forgiveness of our very extensive wrongdoing. It is outrageous if we eagerly accept God's forgiveness but refuse to let empathy, compassion, and forgiveness enter into our political attitudes toward criminals. If we believe that God has not given up on us but keeps trying to transform us away from evil, should we not try to support society's doing that toward offenders?

Support for the death penalty is typical in hard-line religion. Here again, one sees hands clutching at the throat of the fellow servant and hears the demand for full payment. The man in the parable was forgiven a vast sum. His treatment of his fellow servant showed that he had no real sense of what his lord had done for him. When church people support the death penalty, they show that they have not really been overwhelmed by God's gracious offer to forgive all their sins. They have not comprehended that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23)—that they are capital offenders. They join in the prosecution like the scribes and Pharisees who dragged to Jesus the woman caught in adultery. If, however, we truly take in the magnitude of the mercy we are in need of from God, we cannot ask for the death of some other offender.

To murder someone is a terrible act. We do right to feel deeply with persons who have had a loved one murdered. A main rationale for the death penalty is that killing the murderer (or the one found guilty of the murder) helps the family of the victim find "closure." One can take this approach only if one rejects the relevant teachings of Jesus.

A bereaved person who refuses to forgive the murderer—hard as that is to do—is trapped indefinitely in the anger and hostility. But more than that, the person fails to see his or her extreme need for God's forgiveness on a greater scale than even the forgiveness needed by the murderer. Whether one has lost a family member to murder or is simply taking a political position, wanting to have a murderer killed goes totally against what Jesus taught about forgiveness.

In war comes the ultimate in making those seen as offenders pay up. One's own side is regarded as righteous, the other side as evil. War moves beyond unwillingness to forgive into immense destruction and mass killing. In terms of what seems common sense, so much can be said for the need to go to war in some circumstances. Some governments do monstrously evil things. One country may invade another country. All around us is the myth of redemptive violence—ultimately in the mass violence of contemporary warfare. The Persian Gulf War demonstrated how ingeniously successful the media can be in selling technological warfare to the public if the slaughter of great numbers of people is confined almost entirely to the other side.

But if as Christians we seek to let Jesus have the final word, we recognize our utter dependence on the mercy of God—as in the parable. Because we acknowledge our own $10,000,000 debt and God's readiness to forgive it, we cannot proceed to exact vast payment for what is viewed as the wrongdoing of the other side. We see ourselves as forgiven sinners—not as the righteous who have the responsibility to inflict retribution on the unrighteous. Similarly, we see this country not as God's uniquely righteous nation, but as the prime mover behind much of the suffering and evil in the world. We are left without any just platform for going to war.

With this perspective we can refuse to be drawn into the popular "war on terrorism." We cannot join the "good" side, identifying and eliminating the "evil" side. Bombing and mass killing is evil, no matter who does it. The hatred that impels groups to target US embassies and the like is evoked by hateful things the United States does against large numbers of people around the planet. We are not in a black and white world. Considering the parable of the unforgiving servant, we can point to the need for every side to turn back from revenge and live out the graciousness of God.

The parable deals with God's willingness to forgive human sin and the common human unwillingness to forgive the sins of others. But the imagery is that of an economics of compassion. What dominates our world is the hard-line economics of the rich accumulating still more wealth and the poor becoming more abjectly poor. As a rule those who are into hard-line religion align themselves politically with this hard-line economics, which around the world favors the rich, disregards the poor, and ruthlessly abuses the environment. The economics these church people give their political support and vote to is the opposite of the economics chosen by the lord in the parable.

Consider one dimension: The impoverished countries of the world carry a huge burden of international debt owed to the governments and institutions of the rich countries. Typically these countries year after year pay much more in interest and principal on these debts than they can pay for health care and education. This economic squeeze hits the poorest people the hardest. A movement called Jubilee 2000 (from the biblical year of jubilee with its forgiveness of debts) is working for the cancellation of the crushing international debt of the poor countries. Wouldn't that be very much in the spirit of the lord depicted in the parable?

When issues in the society or in the church become quite emotional, belligerent hard-line attitudes come out that figuratively amount to seizing people on the other side by the throat and shouting at them about how wrong they are. Such attitudes can be most pronounced in those who are surest that they are on the righteous side. But we can know from the parable that such hostile, prosecuting attitudes are not what God wants. Stands need to be taken and reasons given; but those who contemplate their own $10,000,000 debt will not commit the outrage of shouting blame at others.

The parable presents the gospel of God's forgiving human sin. But it then describes behavior that goes terribly against the right response to that forgiveness. Churches that put the most emphasis on "salvation" and sins being forgiven—the first scene in the parable—are often the most oblivious to the political implications of the second scene in the parable. We need continually to examine ourselves in our personal and in our political lives, lest we be confounded in the third scene, the time of accounting to the Lord for how we have lived out the grace given us. M.

Dale Aukerman, a writer, preacher, and peace advocate, lives near Union Bridge, Md.

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3 Half-time Congregational Life Team Member Positions

Area 3 with location in West Marva District to work with Atlantic Southeast, Shenandoah, Southeastern, Virlina and West Marva districts; Area I with negotiable location in Southern Pennsylvania or Mid-Atlantic districts, to work with Atlantic Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Middle, Southern, and Western Pennsylvania districts; Area 5 to work with Pacific Southwest, Oregon-Washington, and Idaho districts. **Responsibilities:** Work as part of a team within covenantal partnerships between General Board and districts to resource and consult with congregations and district groups. **Qualifications:** Ability to work with diversity, five years experience in congregational life program development and administrative work, people and technical skills. Bachelor's Degree or commensurate experience; Master's degree in related field preferred.

Application deadline: January 2, 1999, for Area I and 3; January 15 for Area 5.
Contact: Elsie Holderread at (800) 323-8039 or e-mail for position description and further information on eligibility requirements.

Classified Ads

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INVITATIONS

Come worship in the Valley of the Sun with Community Church of the Brethren at 111 N. Sunvalley Blvd., Mesa, AZ 86207. Mail to: 8343 E. Emelita Ave., Mesa, AZ 85208. Tel. (602) 357-9811.

Coming to Florida this winter? Come to Bradenton-Sarasota area. Good Shepherd Church of the Brethren invites you to share great worship celebrations, Sunday school, Saits Alive, Brethren bowling league, arts and crafts, quilting, tour groups, and great fellowship meals. Contact pastor Don White at 941-792-9317 or 758-0988.

"Snow Birds" and all Florida visitors Come worship with us—a small, warm, family of Brethren. Venice Community Church of the Brethren, 2269 S. Tamiami Trail (U.S. 41), Venice, FL 34293 Phone:(941)497-7442.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Camp managers. The Western Plains District is seeking managers for its camps. Both positions are part-time, starting around Memorial Day and ending around Labor Day. Camp Mt. Hermon is located near Tonganoxie, Kan., about 30 minutes from Kansas City. Camp Colorado is located in the Pike National Forest, about an hour from Denver. For more information, contact Ron Achilles, chair of the Outdoor Ministry Commission, at Rt. 1, Box 143, Quinter, Kan. 67752, or call at 785-754-2322.

Chancel Choral music director for experienced adult choir; responsibilities and salary negotiable. Call 717-838-6369 for more info., or submit resume to Palmyra Church of the Brethren, 45 N. Chestnut St., Palmyra, PA 17078. (Fax 717-838-8100).

Elizabethtown College, Assistant Professor—Seeking to hire a faculty member in Peace Studies and Religious Studies. This is expected to be an entry-level, tenure-track position within the Religious Studies Department beginning August 1999. The successful candidate will teach half-time in peace and conflict studies and half-time in religious studies. A completed Ph.D. in either Peace Studies or Religious Studies is preferred (ABDs considered), and a strong commitment to both scholarship and undergraduate learning is required. In addition, a combination of the following qualifications is desirable: international or cross-cultural experience, an understanding and appreciation of the Anabaptist and Pietist faith traditions, and practical experience in an area of conflict resolution. The ability to teach courses in comparative religion is preferred; however, we will consider other areas of specialization that fit well with our program. Review of all applications will begin January 15, 1999. To apply, send letter of application, CV, and names and contact information of three current references to Nancy E. Florey, Director of Human Resources, Elizabethtown College, One Alpha Drive, Elizabethtown, PA 17022-2298, e-mail, floreyne@acad.etown.edu. AA/EO

PUBLICATIONS

From Age to Age: Historians and the Modern Church, a festschrift honoring historian Donald F. Durnbaugh. Includes essays by Jeff Bach, Dale W. Brown, Robert Clouse, David Eller, Franklin Littell, William Kostlevy, Donald E. Miller, Murray Wagner, Hans Schneider, Dennis Slabaugh, Dale Stoffer, and John Howard Yoder, originally read at a conference at Bridgewater College in October 1997. $18.00 plus $3.00 postage and handling. Send check or money order to: Brethren Life and Thought, c/o Bethany Theological Seminary, 615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374, or Forum for Religious Studies, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, VA 22812.

TRAVEL

Brethren Heritage Tour/Passion Play 2000. Register now for the July 29–August 11, 2000, European tour emphasizing Brethren values and heritage. For information contact our tour leaders Don and Hedda Durnbaugh (tel/fax (814)658-3222, e-mail: durnbaughd@juniata.edu) or Randall and Peggy Yoder (814)643-3221. Brochure with full itinerary and price will be available by late fall 1998. To ensure space, send $100 per person (made payable to MTS Tours) before December 31, 1998, to Tour 2000, R.D. 1, Box 312, Huntingdon, PA 16652.

Oberammergau and Eastern European Tour. Urgent! Reserve a place now for a preliminary $100 deposit per person. Travel on August 28, 2000, from Dulles International Airport to Budapest, then to Vienna, Prague, Berlin (via Dresden), Nuremburg (via Leipzig), Oberammergau, and Munich. Price $3298 per person for this 14-day tour including hotels, all breakfasts and dinners, and first class tickets to the Passion Play. For more information contact Wayne F. Geisert, President-Emeritus, Bridgewater College, Box 40, Bridgewater, VA 22812. Phone:(540)433-1433 or 828-5494.

Turning Points

New members

Antioch, Rocky Mount, Va.,: Greg Cooper, Sebrina Ruth-Cooper, Stephanie LaPrade
Bear Creek, Dayton, Ohio: Shoba Berkuchel, Jeremy Bucher, Roscoe O'Hair, Sarah O'Hair, Zachary Patterson
Bethany, Farmington, Del.: Frederick Miller, Matthew Schiferl, Ron Macomber, Michael Layton
Blue River, Columbia City, Ind.: Jeremy Gipe, Kimberly Bennett, Tony Martin, Courtney Libben, Pam Gaerte, Ryan Gaerte, Rachel Frank, Bryan Perry, Ashlee King, Adam King, Michael Gaerte, Spenser Perry, Ben Shively
Brandts, St. Thomas, Pa.: Ben and Carol Draper, Carey Frey, Stacy Hammersla, Amy Heckman, Nicole Heckman, Cassandra Lehman, Teresa O'Neal
Canaan, Gibbon Glade, Pa.: Duane, Julie, Ashley, Levi, and Shannon Rishel, Derrick Seese, Amanda Seese, Matthew Dennis, Jonathan Smith
Champaign, Ill.: Steven Landon
Clover Creek, Fredericksburg, Pa.: Joel Banaszak, Derek J. Bassler, Aaron T. Byler, Leah M. Hoover, Connie Martin, Richard Glunt
County Line, Champion, Pa.: Anthony Baronie, Vic Baronie
Defiance, Ohio: Roberta Wagner
Dupont, Ohio: Shane Kraft, Jamie Kraft
East Cocalico, Reamstown, Pa.: Amy Good, Ralyssa Kreider, Roseanna Kreider, Ralph Kreider, Kathy Stoltzfus, Lisa and Jeff Sweigart
English River, South English, Iowa: Ray and Cheryl Reeves
Geiger, Friedens, Pa.: Mary Rossman, David Wentz, Lisa Wentz
Greenmount, Harrisonburg, Va.: Isaac William Burgess, Kendra Lynn Knupp, Patricia Luz Carneiro
Harman, W.Va.: Merry Jo Vance, Snyder John Montoney
Heidelberg, Meyerstown, Pa.: Crystal Mull, Laurel Witman
Lampeter, Pa.: Diana Austin, Kristen Thomas, Robert and Jennifer Williams, Daniel and Tracy Monville, Gregory and Sandra Stone, Jarelle and Aimee Smoker
Lima, Ohio: Jodi May
Long Green Valley, Glen Arm, Md.: Jim Church, John Pinkas, Sharon Pinkas, Joshua Pinkas, Darren Gonzalez, Pam Bryant, Sean White, Jan Hildebrand, Debbie Hildebrand
Memorial, Martinsburg, Pa.: Dorothy S. Ritchey
Middlebury, Ind.: Michelle Jensen, Melissa Leedy, Cameron Pauls, Stephen Troyer, Scott DeWilde, Jack and Marsha Payne, Mary Backert, Dick Elias, Lori Jackson, Lisa Jensen, Jeff and Sandy Bruens, Phil and Tonia Pixley, Russell and Denise Jensen, Roger and Lorie Copeland, Kim Floring, Craig and Dawn Jackson, Dave and Deanna Black, Darlene and Terry Drake, Scott Hammond, Cathy Heign, Marilyn Miller
Midland, Va.: Angela Smith, Nicole Byler
Monitor, McPherson, Kan.: Hugh and Kay Billhimer, Renee Schowengerdt
New Carlisle, Ohio: Marjorie Ann Miller
North Bend, Danville, Ohio: Chelsey Rose Hashman
Onekama, Mich.: Adam Graham, Karl Joseph, Greg Robison, Tim Robison, Emily Tompke, Kirk Tompke
Osceola, Mo.: Carl De Long, Mercedus De Long, Lillian Springstube, Mavis Barksdale
Pleasant Hill, Spring Grove, Pa.: Landon Miller, Kirk Schildt, Kala Schildt, Derek Nell, Matthew Trone, Nathaniel Trone, Abigail Crone, Beth Crone, Devin Fodor, Tyler Fodor, Daren Bievenour
Pleasant View, Fayetteville, W.Va.: Emily I. Saplak
Poplar Ridge, Defiance, Ohio: Claudy Chiron
Ridgeway Community, Harrisburg, Pa.: John Dressler, Judy Laudermilch, Keith Fruchtl
South Creek, South Whitley, Ind.: Loree Mishler
Thurmont, Md.: Joe Albright
Walnut Grove, Johnstown, Pa.: Ross Camut, Andrew Dovrota, Jr., Keith G. Guydo, Theresa M. Vogel, Tammie N. Wesner, Sarah L. Wesner, Alison Page, Stephen Page, Peggy Younkin
Waterford, Calif: Caesar and Anthony Reyes
West Milton, Ohio: Mike Munson

Wedding Anniversaries

Allison, Wayne and Vera, Johnstown, Pa., 50
Bailey, Carol and Neva, Morrill, Kan., 50
Baker, Harold and Betty, West Milton, Ohio, 60
Baliles, Barney and Ruth, Arlington,Va., 50
Bendinelli, Frank and Mary Elaine, Philadelphia, Pa., 50
Berlin, Sei and Betty, Wyomissing, Pa., 50
Detrick, Ernest and Elizabeth, N. Manchester, Ind., 60
Emley, Harvey and Ramah, La Verne, Calif., 70
Frick, Bob and Doris, La Verne, Calif., 50
Graham, Stanley and Helen, Rockford, Ill. 50
Graybill, Randolph and Mildred, Roanoke, Va., 60
Gross, Vernon and Ruth, Kingsley, Iowa, 50
Hamilton, Velma and David, Virden, Ill., 70
Hartman, Galen and Dorothy, Annville, Pa., 55
Hissong, Wendell and Janet, Englewood, Ohio, 50
Howes, Gene and Geraldine, Kaleva, Mich., 60
Kaltenbaugh, Robert and Natalie, Bradenton, Fla., 50
Kuhn, Richard and Cathrine, Hanover, Pa., 50
Lymanstall, Robert and Wilma, Bradenton, Fla., 50
Miller, Loren and Helen, Warsaw, Ind., 50
Oxley, Derald and Audrey, Salkum, Wash., 50
Pence, Bernice and Gerry, La Verne, Calif., 50
Pritt, Paul and Jacqueline, Windber, Pa., 50
Redner, Earl and Mary, Wyomissing, Pa., 50
Rousselow, Virgil and Mary Helen, Waterloo, Iowa, 55
Russi, Bernice and Jack, La Verne Calif., 50
Shaffer, Howard and Florence, Johnstown, Pa., 55
Smith, Harrison and Eleanor, Gibbon Glade, Pa., 55
Snavely, Emerson and Elsie, Palmyra, Pa., 50
Stull, Paul and Eldora, Danville, Ohio, 65
Stunty, Robert and Theda, Scottsdale, Ariz., 50
Talkington, Mildred and James, Virden, Ill., 55
Thompson, Fred and Lorraine, Roanoke, Va., 55
Wampler, Arnold and Betty, Lebanon, Pa., 50
Weaver, Lee and Hazel, Johnstown, Pa., 55
Wickert, Don and Esther, La Verne, Calif., 50
Young, Lester and Mary, Warsaw, Ind., 55

Deaths

Adams, Mary E., 84, Warsaw, Ind., Nov. 3
Albrite, Lucille, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 27
Armentrout, Jocie, 90, Harman, W.Va., Oct. 15
Baird, Marie Walter, 81, Duncansville, Pa., Jan. 14
Baker, Kenneth M., 81, Martinsburg, Pa., July 8
Barnhart, Glendell "Bobbie,"72, Phoenix, Ariz., July 1
Barton, Juanita, San Jose, Calif., March
Bauserman, Waldo, 73, Ronceverte, W.Va., Sept. 10
Bazzle, Claudia D., 77, Broadway, Va., Oct. 25
Bishop, Ray, 89, Defiance, Ohio, July 21
Bochoven, Annette, 63, Dayton, Ohio, Sept. 19
Bowman, Ida W., 90, New Oxford, Pa., May 15
Brandt, Abner, 86, Manheim, Pa., Oct. 12
Breidenbaugh, Edna, 83, Glen Arm, Md., Aug. 13
Breidenbaugh, Joyce, 67, Baltimore, Md., Jan. 3
Bushong, Hugh, 98, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 19
Chaney, Vera A., 75, Frostburg, Md., July 31
Cline, Esther, Waterford, Calif., June 18
Coffman, Edna, 92, La Verne, Calif., Aug. 28
Cooper, Edward Gale, 96, New Carlisle, Ohio, Aug. 26
Corle, J. Milton, 82, Martinsburg, Pa., March 8
Corle, Richard E., 52, Martinsburg, Pa., Sept. 9
Dalton, Peggy H., 50, Bassett, Va., Sept. 9
Diehl, Wilmer J., 94, Port Republic, Va., Sept. 18
Dilling, Howard, 84, East Freedom, Pa., Dec. 16, 1997
Donelly, Mildred, 102, Carlisle, Pa., Sept. 29
Donnelly, Emmitt, 89, La Verne, Calif., July 30
Driver, Erva, 82, Dayton, Va., Nov. 2
Driver, Violet Cook, 90, Briery Branch, Va., Sept. 12
Durham, Myrtle, 91, Phoenix, Ariz., March 17
Eitniear, Eva, 91, Defiance, Ohio, Sept. 5
Fahrney, Wilbur R., 77, Waynesboro, Pa., Sept. 21
Fearins, Zona, Baltimore, Md., March 28
Feaster, Patricia Virginia Lee, 47, Harrisonburg, Va., July 9
Feathers, Brady, 90, Claysburg, Pa., June 6
Fillmore, Elmer, 86, Cushing, Okla., June 15
Flora, Roy, 77, Rocky Mount, Va., Aug. 6
Flory, Esther, 92, McPherson, Kan., Sept. 25
Foley, Dorothy M. Higgs, 66, Harrisonburg, Va., July 12
Francis, Maxine, Waterford, Calif., April 22
Fyook, Evelyn, 69, Johnstown, Pa., Nov. 4
Garber, Howard R., 88, Timberville, Va., Oct. 28
Gibson, Melvin, 98, La Verne, Calif., July 28
Grosse, Lottie J., 90, Goshen, Ind., Oct. 22
Groves, Claude M., 82, Hubbard, Ohio, Oct. 7
Hamer, Maryanna, 102, Waterloo, Iowa, Sept. 13
Harvey, Homer H., 83, Hughson, Calif., Oct. 21
Heckman, Mildred, 90, Fayetteville, Pa., June 28
Hedrick, Glen, 84, Baltimore, Md., July 27
Hedrick, Mary, 77, Baltimore, Md., March 17
Heeter, Mary, 97, Defiance, Ohio, October
Helfrich, Walter E., Jr., 96, New Oxford, Pa., Oct. 13
Helmick, Melvin R., 69, Moorefield, W.Va., Oct. 19
Hershberger, Claudett, 92, Middlebury, Ind., June 18
Hicks, Robert A., 67, Harrisonburg, Va., Sept. 22
Horn, Harris S., 74, Dover, Pa., Sept. 22
Houser, Edward Page, 80, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 11
Huck, Helen, 78, La Verne, Calif., Aug. 28
Jenkins, Maise Alice, 79, Luray, Va., Oct. 1
Johnson, Evelyn, 73, Gridley, Calif., Sept. 10
Jordan, Mary O., 64, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 10
Kepner, Carl J., 71, Spring Grove, Pa., Aug. 19
Kimble, Ray P., 84, Stuarts Draft, Va., Oct. 6
Kinard, Ruth R., 89, Red Lion, Pa., Sept. 3
Kline, Fred Lee, 73, Timberville, Va., Oct. 6
Laury, Zelda, 94, Greenville, Ohio, Oct. 29
Leiphart, Nelson P., 83, New Oxford, Pa., Oct. 21
Lengel, Leland, 64, McPherson, Kan., Oct. 28
Long, John D., 84, New Oxford, Pa., Nov. 6
Lutz, Anna, 85, Lititz, Pa., Oct. 9
Metz, D. Merle, 71, Martinsburg, Pa., Oct. 30
Michael, Robert C., 49, Mount Sidney, Va., Oct. 3
Miller, Ella Mae, 81, New Oxford, Pa., Dec. 22, 1997
Mongold, Jannette, 62, Odenton, Md., Sept. 27
Moyers, James Wesley, Sr., 86, Harrisonburg, Va., June 9
Myers, Marie, 72, Thurmont, Md.,

Oct. 21
Myers, Victor Jackson, 87, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 8
Phelps, Andy, 24, Kokomo, Ind., Aug. 11
Pitts, C. Wilma, 84, Kensington, Md., Oct. 18
Popard, Jeanette Ursula, 77, Bridgewater, Va., Oct. 17
Reber, Norman F., 88, New Oxford, Pa., Sept. 26
Reed, Alvis, 81, Bel Air, Md., June 29
Rhodes, Anna Lois, 66, Martinsburg, Pa., Oct. 30
Rhodes, Regina M., 86, Duncansville, Pa., Sept. 9
Richardson, Lela, 74, Champaign, Ill., Sept. 23
Robertson, Ronald, 69, Windber, Pa., Sept. 4
Robinson, Wilson Wiley, 78, Harrisonburg, Va., June 9
Rowland, Ronald, 85, Cape Coral, Fla., Oct. 2
Schulte, Eugene, 66, New Milton, W.Va., June 13
Sheffer, Russell A., 83, Churchville, Va., Aug. 16
Sherer, Dollie, 76, Phoenix, Ariz., Sept. 11
Shipe, Annie White, 88, Bergton, Va., June 8
Simmons, Carl Jr., 71, Randallstown, Md., Oct. 9
Sinks, Opal Deeter, 88, Dayton, Ohio, April 18
Snapp, Florence, 88, Waterloo, Iowa, Oct. 21
Snyder, Lola, Rockwell, Mich., May 27
Spenker, Ruth I., 82, Modesto, Calif., Sept. 30
Steele, William L., 71, Roaring Spring, Pa., March 4
Stiving, Ervin R., 79, Lorida, Fla., Aug. 12
Stoltzfus, Aquila, 85, Lititz, Pa., Sept. 22
Stull, Carl "Bill," 79, Danville, Ohio, July 10
Stump, Lillian Mae, 66, Christiana, Pa.
Sullivan, Luther F., 82, Grottoes, Va., Oct. 13
Swinehart, Julia, 17, Bristol, Ind., July 13
Temple, Ferne, 92, McPherson, Kan., Oct. 1
Thompson, Raymond, 76, Milford, Ind., Oct. 14
Townsend, Paul, 87, Brethren, Mich., April 27
Vaneiken, Albert "Sonny," 67, Windber, Pa., Oct. 27
Walter, Catharine, 94, Claysburg, Pa., April 18
Wampler, Amos Jacob, 82, Broadway, Va., June 15
Williams, Myrl, 86, Cushing, Okla., July 26
Wilson, Edward, 82, Arlington, Va., June 12
Wimer, Woodrow Wilson, 85, Moorefield, W.Va., Oct. 12
Wisler, Betty M., 77, Martinsburg, Pa., Sept. 28
Wolters, Ruby, 92, McPherson, Kan., Sept. 23
Workman, Kenneth, 88, Danville, Ohio, June 26
Young, Forest, 77, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 20
Zimmerman, Florence, 97, Bridgewater, Va., Oct. 14

Pastoral Placements

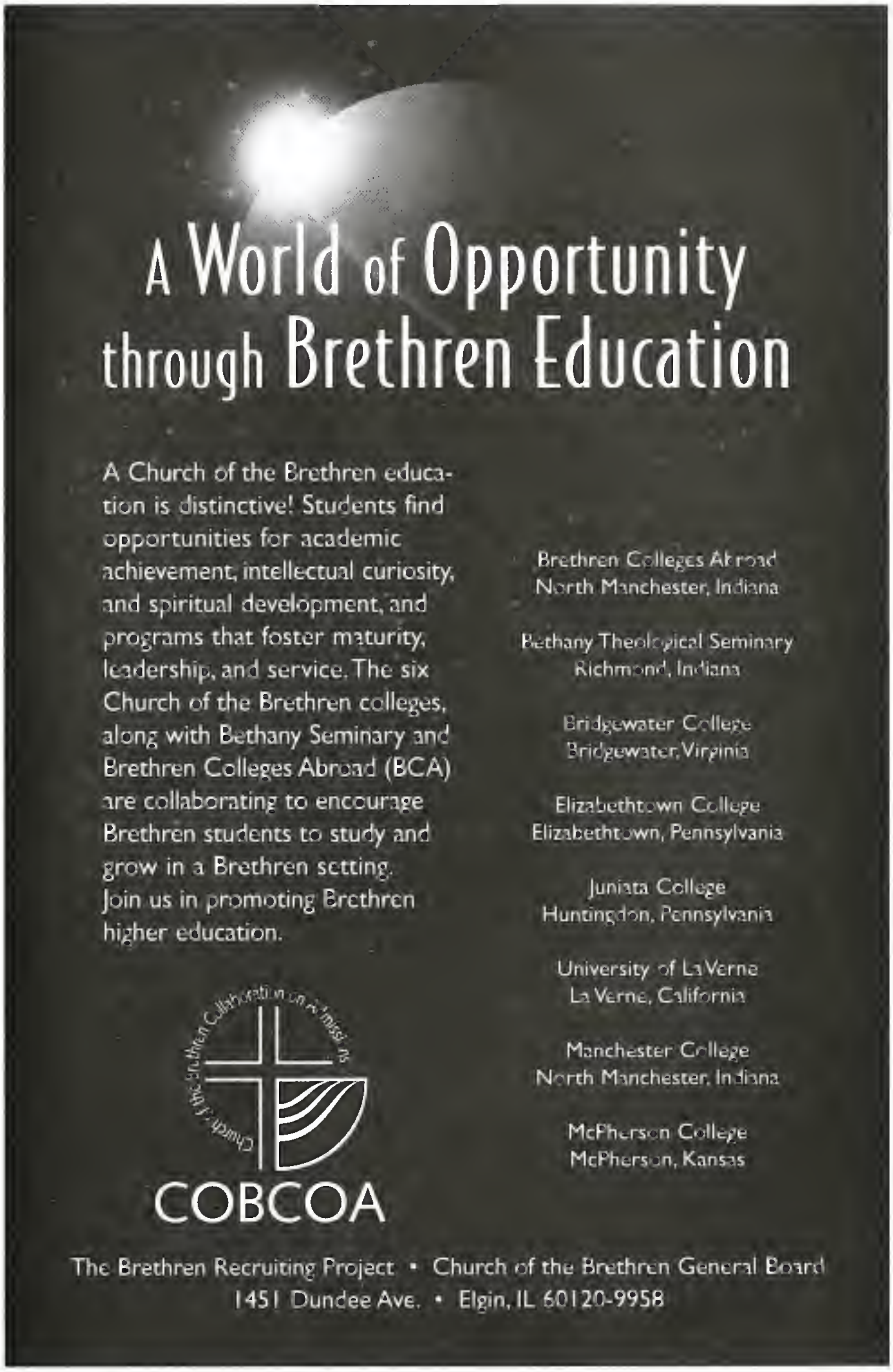
Cosner, Elmer, to Red Creek, Bethel, W. Marva
Criswell, Scott, to Claysburg, Pa.
Hollenberg, Keith, from Hempfield, Petersburg, Pa., to York First, York, Pa.
Kettering, Bob, to Lititz, Pa.
Miller, David L., from Albright, Roaring Spring, Pa., to Carson Valley, Duncansville, Pa.
Mitchell, Vernon, from Plymouth, Ind., to San Diego, Calif.
Powell, Lewis, from Point, Schellsburg, Pa., to Valley Point, Orbisonia, Pa.
Wolf, Burton, from West Milton, Ohio, to West Charleston, Tipp City, Ohio
Yaeger, Harold, to Ridge, Shippensburg, Pa.

Licensings

Barber, Howard, May 20, Prince of Peace, Kettering, Ohio
Elsea, Henry, Jr., July 18, Tear Coat, Augusta, W.Va.
Lewis, Linda, May 20, Prince of Peace, Kettering, Ohio
Polzin, Nathan, Aug. 14, New Life Christian Fellowship, Mt. Pleasant, Mich.
Riffe, John, Jr., Aug. 24, Durbin, W.Va.
Vardaman, Matthew, Sept. 19, Pomona Fellowship, Pomona, Calif.
Walther, Richard, Aug. 24, Durbin, W.Va.
Wolf, Elizabeth Ann (Betsy), May 11, Happy Corner, Clayton, Ohio

Ordinations

Coursen, Robert A., Sept. 12, Woodworth, Youngstown, Ohio
Daggett, Joan, May 17, Mill Creek, Tryon, N.C.
Hall, Wayne, Sept. 12, Piney Creek, Taneytown, Md.
Wiltschek, Walt, Sept. 12, Westminster, Md.
Wooten, Eddie, May 16, Little Pine, N.C.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Huntingdon, Pennsylvania

University of La Verne
La Verne, California

Manchester College
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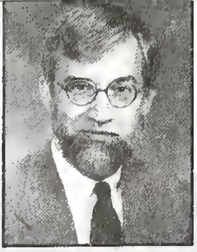

Editorial

Peacefully simple, together

For me there are two Christmases—the church and baby Jesus Christmas and then all the rest. And I'm afraid that Christmas-as-birthday is not the first image that comes to mind when I hear the word. When I hear Christmas I cringe. Not only has the word become synonymous with commercialism, it also means busy. Too busy. And too much food and drink. Too much of everything. I don't look forward to the holidays, because Christmas means too much to me.

Everybody talks about simplifying Christmas, except maybe Brethren. We feel too guilty, because we know, vaguely, that we are supposed to be simple and plain. We suspect that our friends at church give their kids gifts of fresh fruit, so we don't ask. We just get through the glut while pretending that toys aren't us. Meanwhile, small but noisy movements have grown up around moderating the culture of consumption. "Buy-Nothing Day" gets more attention every year. The new simplicity movement has become trendy. The new fad for less stuff has spawned a prospering self-help industry, and its gurus are getting rich.

There is much for Brethren to learn from anti-consumerists and the secular simplifiers, but there is much for us to teach as well. Consuming less is an important aspect of simple living, but only one aspect. Although I will feel somewhat guilty when I shop for gifts and open them, I'm not ready to surrender the subject of simple living to those who have tamed that devil better than I have. There is a larger issue here, a different approach, a deeper meaning to simplicity than renunciation.

Brethren come to simple living for different reasons than others who find the path attractive. Motivation is important, because why we go there makes all the difference in how we get there and how many we can get to go with us. Our reasons for keeping things plain are not to be more comfortable, serene or slim. Brethren choose another way of living so we can love God more. And because Jesus lived this way, and taught us that this is the way to live. The early Brethren took seriously and literally the instructions of Jesus on self-denial, on earthly treasures, and on nonconformity to the world. It is as a matter of obedience, not self-improvement, that we seek once again to be a plain and peculiar people.

From a Christian approach, external simplicity is not an end in itself. It is not even a means to an end always, though slowing down our lives is often a first step toward making it possible to cultivate what some have called "simplicity of heart." It is from a strong heart that simplicity flows best, from the inside out.

We are helped here by Richard Foster, who spends two rich chapters of his *Freedom of Simplicity* (Harper and Row, 1981) on the subject of inward simplicity. He quotes Thomas Kelly: "We feel honestly the pull of many obligations and try to fulfill them all. And we are unhappy, uneasy, strained, oppressed, and fearful we shall be shallow. We have hints that there is a way of life vastly richer and deeper than all this hurried existence, a life of unhurried serenity and peace and power. If only we could slip over into that Center!"

Foster writes it is living from the "divine center" that "lies at the heart of all Christian simplicity." He continues: "As we yield to the Center everything about us becomes focused, synoptic. This yielding is nothing more than the experience of the great commandment to love God with all our being." He writes that for years he thought that serving God was another duty to be added onto an already busy schedule. "But slowly I came to see that God desired to be not on the outskirts, but at the heart of my experience. Gardening was no longer an experience outside of my relationship with God—I discovered God in the gardening. God in Christ had become the center."

This takes me back to my two Christmases. The one is the birth of Jesus, when God came to live among us on earth and to remind us of God's love and justice and compassion for the poor. The other Christmas is an artificial contrivance that uses a holy season as an excuse for all sorts of glittery add-ons, some more disagreeable than others. I can diminish the second by enlarging the first. The way to simplify the season may be to stop trying to simplify, but rather to keep returning to the manger of Jesus. When I get trapped in the trappings of the holidays, I can go back to the barn where the baby is. This is where on a silent night I can ponder the profound implications of God's gift. "All the rest" will come into perspective, joy will return to my world, and the cringe will come out of Christmas.

If we center on the manger, Jesus will teach us the rest of simplicity. This was the promise of the song Zechariah sang in anticipation of the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:78, 79)

> "By the tender mercy of our God,
> the dawn from on high will break upon us,
> to give light to those who sit in darkness
> and in the shadow of death,
> to guide our feet into the way of peace."

—FLETCHER FARRA

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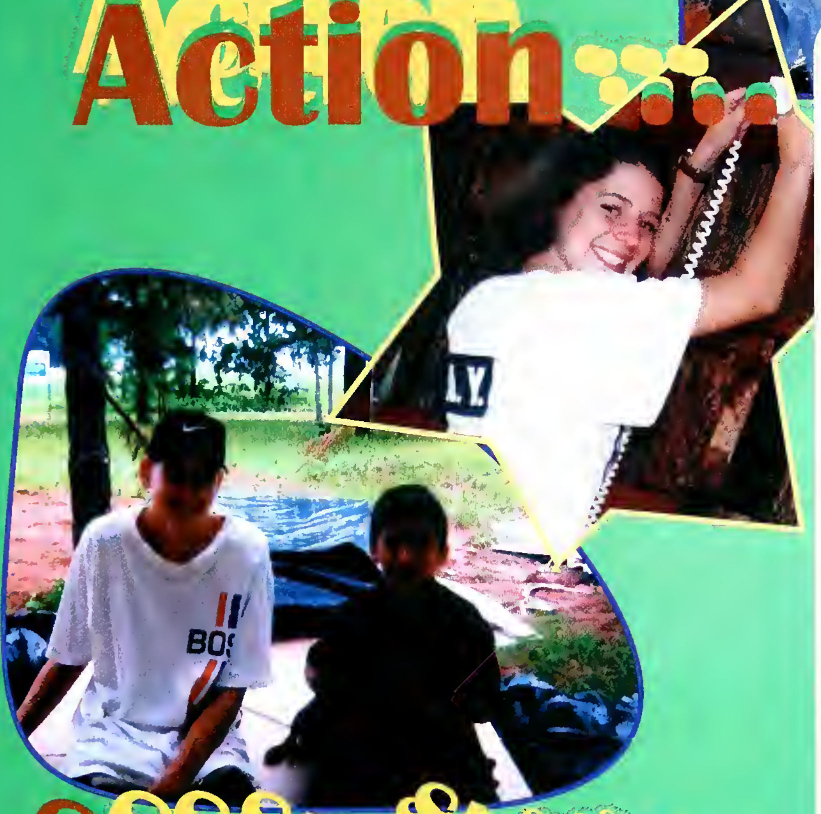
Church of the Brethren

Called to Action…



June 5-13	Coleraine, N. Ireland (Young Adult)
June 14-20	Heifer Project Ranch (Sr. High)
June 14-20	Puerto Rico (Sr. High)
June 20-27	Brooklyn, NY (BRF)
June 21-27	Tijuana, Mexico (Sr. High)
June 21-27	Germantown, PA (Sr. High)
June 23-27	Harrisburg, PA (Jr. High)
July 4- 8	Inspiration Center Lake Geneva, WI (Jr. High)
July 5-11	Broken Bow, OK (Sr. High)
July 7-13	Jamaica (Sr. High)
July 11-17	Kentucky Mt. Housing (Sr. High)
July 12-18	Orangeburg, SC (Sr. High)
July 14-18	New Windsor, MD (Jr. High)
July 19-25	Denver, CO (Sr. High)
July 19-25	Putney, VT (Sr. High)
July 21-25	Harrisburg, PA, Intergenerational (Youth & Older Adults)
July 26-31	Habitat for Humanity: Americus, GA (Sr. High)
July 28-August 1	Washington, DC (Jr. High)
July 28-August 3	St. Croix, USVI (Sr. High)
August 2- 8	Mendenhall, MS (Sr. High)
August 4- 8	Indianapolis, IN (Jr. High)
August 9-15	Chicago, IL (Sr. High)
August 9-15	Gould Farm Monterey, MA (Sr. High)
August 11-15	Richmond, VA (Jr. High)

Sharing God's Love

For more information, call the **Youth/Young Adult** Office of the Church of the Brethren at 800-323-8039 or write to Kim and Torin, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 (email: COBYouth_gb@brethren.org)

"It was awful. Our family's will was a disaster. We had both changed jobs. We had two more kids. The guardians named for our children were divorced. And, nothing was left to organizations that we both care deeply about now," confessed Ken Neher, director of Funding. "What was worse, it's my job to remind people how important it is to have a will and keep it updated. Putting it off bothered us both. Now, finally we've made the changes. What a relief!"

To die without a will or with a will that is improperly written is a tragedy that happens all too often. Having an up-to-date will insures that possessions go to the person or causes according to your wishes, and the peace you feel when it is all in order may surprise you!

FINANCIAL RESOURCE COUNSELING

A Stewardship Service of the
Church of the Brethren General Board

For free information or consultation about wills or other estate planning tools, contact the Financial Resource Counselors and Funding staff of the Church of the Brethren General Board. Call 1-800-336-4413 or write Church of the Brethren Funding, Southgate Professional Plaza, 31 Southgate Court, Suite 202, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

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